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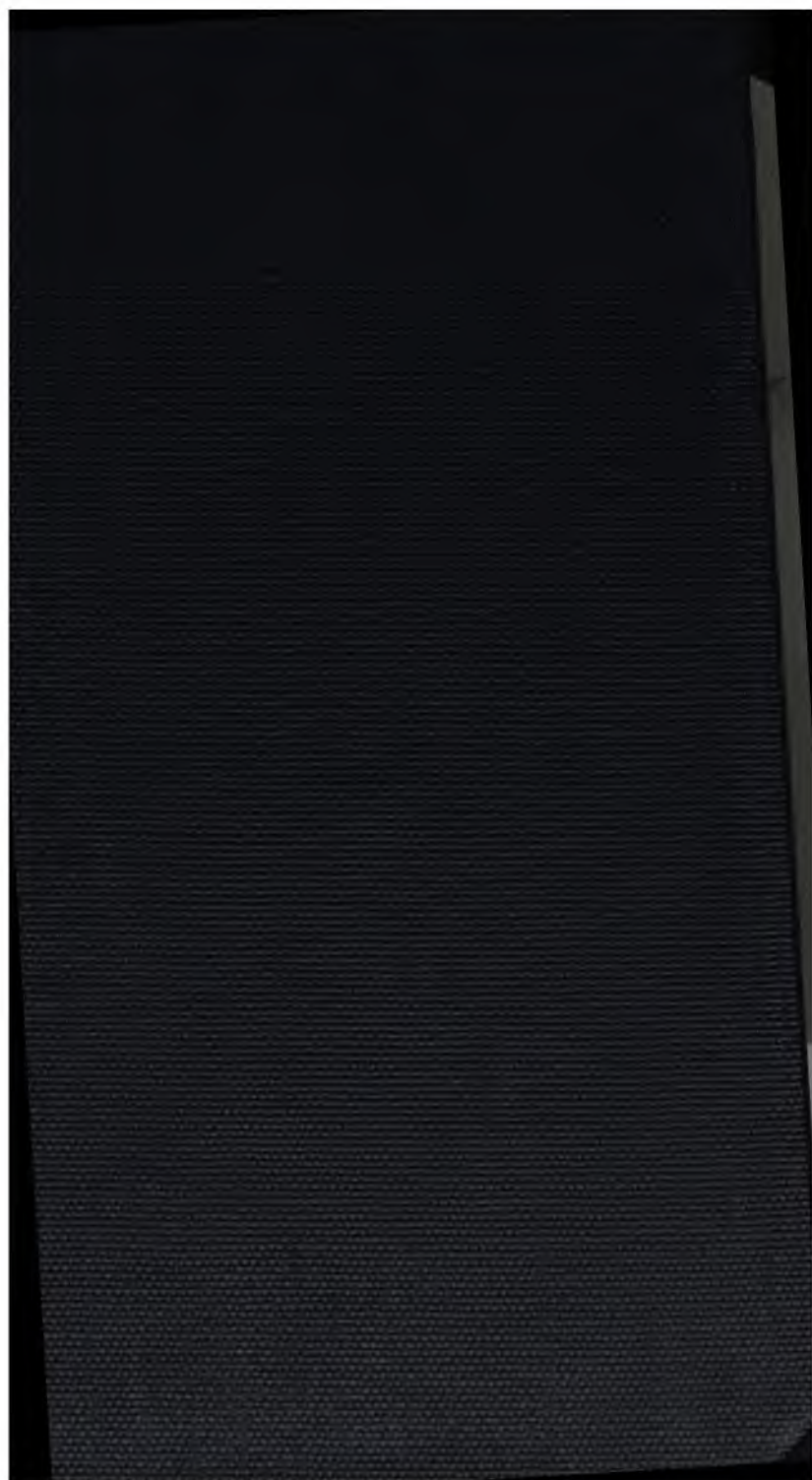
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CATHEDRAL OF SEVILLE.

THE  
CITIES AND WILDS  
OF  
ANDALUCIA.

BY  
THE HON. R. DUNDAS MURRAY.

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TO

LORD MURRAY

THIS VOLUME IS INSCRIBED

WITH EVERY SENTIMENT OF GRATITUDE AND ESTEEM,

BY

THE AUTHOR.





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# THE CITIES AND WILDS

OF

## ANDALUCIA.

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### CHAPTER I.

CADIZ BY MOONLIGHT.—THE MARKET-PLACE.—GAY ASPECT OF THE CITY.—THE ALAMEDA.—ANDALUCIAN BEAUTY.—HISTORY OF CADIZ.—CHICLANA.—BAROSA.

IT was by the beautiful moonlight of Andalusia that I first saw Cadiz. Leaning over the low bulwark of a rakish schooner, I rested my eyes upon the ocean city, at first not so much in admiration of the scene as with the satisfaction of being at length released by its presence from anxiety and danger. Our voyage had been an eventful one, and the little craft under my feet had run the gauntlet of various watery disasters ere it now glided with the ease and grace of a sea-bird up the waters of the bay. Could it have spoken—and the crew declared it could do everything but speak—what a long yarn would it have spun as it recalled past scenes!—the collision at midnight, with its crash of rending timbers and moments of fearful suspense; the tempest that chased it into the nearest port, a dismasted and crippled wreck; and then, when the breeze was fair and all went well, the sudden squall that passed over

with resistless strength, and bent it down into the waves to the verge of overturning.

After a month's listening to the roar of winds and waters, the calmness of the bay and the serenity of the night appeared something unnatural: perhaps the impression was aided by the aspect of the city, which wore, as it seemed to me, a strangely pale and sepulchral hue. Our vessel soon swung to its anchor, surrounded by shipping, whose black hulls and cordage chequered with shadows the silvery surface around them. In front lay Cadiz, no longer "rising o'er the dark blue sea" an indistinct white speck as I had first seen it, but a long low mass of monumental whiteness resting by the side of a moonlit expanse which was as calm as a lake. Not a light twinkled from the dwellings, although the night was barely begun, nor did a sound come from them; all was silent as the grave: yet "It is not dead, but sleepeth," we said of the city.

Morning came, with its sunshine and stir, but without the power, so it seemed, to awake the sleeping city. While the bay was traversed by objects in motion, ships coming in and others sailing out, and boats flitting across the surface, it displayed none of the usual signs by which cities in our climate announce the presence of a stirring population. There was no smoke rising into the air nor streaming away with the wind; no hum or murmur was to be heard; the outlines of its edifices and towers cut clear and well-defined against the sky: and as, according to our notions, a smokeless roof is a deserted one, the impressions conveyed by this prospect were connected with solitude and desolation in the streets we had yet to see. Yet, this apart, the aspect of the city was imposing; walled and bastioned, and showing lines of stately dwellings

towards the bay, it looked just the place from whence fleets and armadas had departed, and where merchants had heaped up the wealth of princes.

Entering by the sea-gate, we pass at once into the market-place, where picturesque illusions and historic reminiscences speedily vanish amid its vulgar realities. Yet the scene, though always a common-place one, is here animated and striking; its actors are arrayed in colours and draperies at once novel and pleasing to the eye, and which mingle together with pictorial effect. Those vociferating and gesticulating groups are clothed in brown cloaks, and shadowed by fantastic sombreros: their swarthy skins, coal-black hair, no less than their flashing eyes, proclaim them the excitable children of the South. They scream, they shout, and appear to be on the point of tearing the knives from their sashes to terminate their disputes, which, after all, are nothing more than bargainings. Above the clamour rise the voices of the venders of shell-fish and water; "*Agua fresca,—fresca como nieve!*" is drawled out by the latter with a long monotonous cry. "Is water actually sold by the glass?" exclaims the native of the rainy north, forgetting that as here cloudless skies prevail during the summer months, water becomes scarce, and, as a consequence, a luxury. Then there are other features of the scene as strange and novel; droves of burros, with their tinkling bells, passing through the crowd; or, mayhap, an ox-cart of antique shape slowly wends its way past; or a horseman, seated on a high-peaked saddle, bestrides a prancing steed with a flowing mane and tail; he is muffled to the eyes in an ample cloak, and by his side hangs a gun or carbine, bespeaking a land where each man must defend his property by the armed hand, or lose it. And who are those



nun-like figures that mingle with the throng? A black drapery covers their heads and falls upon their shoulders; in many instances the rest of the dress is of the same mournful colour. That head-dress is the mantilla, and these are no nuns, but Spanish dames in their national costume. A moment's observation dispels the first impressions produced by their sad-coloured attire; those eyes, dark, lustrous, and eloquent, are fraught with no religious fire or feeling, but cast glances around—free, though not immodest—and in which there is felt to lurk a strange power; their symmetrical forms are developed by the close-fitting dress they wear; a tiny foot peeps from below; the fan in one hand is in a constant state of fluttering excitement; and thus arrayed, the “daughters of Cadiz” move through the crowd with the wondrous grace of their country, and that step which no other land can equal.

Turning towards what seemed a narrow cleft in the line of houses encircling this scene, I entered the street of which it was the opening; and while passing on to the Fonda Inglesa, had opportunity to survey the peculiar architecture of Spanish cities. Looking upwards, there were lofty houses with whitened fronts, dazzling to the eye; balconies and various devices in bright colours diversified the exterior, and vied with each other in giving a lively air to their respective habitations: there was nothing of the sombre aspect I had been accustomed in fancy to associate with the streets of Spain; every edifice appeared modern and new, or, if ancient, was painted “up to the eyes” like some withered cheek, the better to conceal the ravages of time. The whole effect was therefore gay and brilliant beyond description; everywhere seemed

stamped on the walls the wreathed smiles of a city of pleasure. Such, I believe, will be the first impression of every voyager on landing at Cadiz; he is dazzled by the tinsel and Tyrian dyes in which it is arrayed, and imagines he has seen nothing so fascinating among cities, or so like the creation of enchantment: in a few days he surveys it with sobered eyes, and then feels disposed to condemn as dreamers the poets who have sung, and the travellers who have rehearsed, its charms. The illusion, it must be owned, is very powerful at first, and is in no small degree aided by the aspect of the moving throng that peoples the streets: when sombreros, flowing cloaks, and mantillas decorate the figures in this varied scene—when each pair of masculine lips embraces a cigar, and each feminine right hand rattles a fan—it is hard to believe that a population so theatrically attired, and so strangely occupied, have not been conjured up to give effect to the gaudy façades before which they move, and are not destined to vanish when that purpose is answered.

A short hour will suffice to explore all that is worthy of being seen in the city, and to gain a sufficiently accurate idea of its position and internal structure. It is seen to occupy the wave-beaten extremity of a long and narrow peninsula, and to compress within a massive girdle of ramparts the dwellings of 60,000 inhabitants into the smallest possible space; every inch of ground is valuable here, and broad streets and spacious squares are accordingly eschewed, in order that as great a number of habitations as possible may be condensed within circumscribed limits. The effect of this, however, is to surround the observer, wherever he goes, with a wearisome glare of stone; it paves the ground he treads, presses close to his vision in white or variegated

masses, intercepts every distant prospect, and leaves him only the view of objects hard, angular, and rigid. The eye soon longs for some spot of verdure to gladden its sight, but searches for it in vain amid the stone-built city : on the Alameda it descries a few dwarfed and sickly trees struggling for existence on the gravel-strewn soil ; a few more may perhaps be found in some deserted nooks, but neither sward nor flower-pot flourishes under them, nor anywhere breaks in upon the grey pavement that wraps the surface of this Elysium of pleasure. I have mentioned the word Alameda : it is hardly necessary to inform the reader that this is a levelled space set apart for the paseo, or promenade, one of the most important divisions in the routine of Spanish life. Here it is placed on the eastern side of the city, contiguous to the ramparts, and, terrace-like, overlooks the bay and its shores studded with towns ; among the lofty dwellings that partly encircle it, there is one over which waves the British flag, and marks at once the site of the Consulate and a mansion famed for its hospitality.\* As soon as the day begins to close, a tide of fashionables sets in through the various avenues leading to it, and after diffusing itself for a time in various eddies among the exterior walks, or pausing to rest upon the lines of stone benches that fringe the centre one, concentrates at last into a narrow stream that divides the Alameda

\* Few Englishmen have ever visited Cadiz without experiencing the kindness and hospitality of the late Sir John Brackenburgh, the father and predecessor in office of our present Consul there. I gladly embrace this opportunity of recording how much I am indebted to him for his assistance in facilitating my subsequent wanderings through Andalucia, by the means which his official position commanded.

into equal portions. For an hour the current continues to flow up and down within the bounds established by custom; the young and old, the "girls of Cadiz" and their gallants, mingling in a confused throng, from which arises a murmur of lively voices. As group after group passes by, there is observable a wonderful similarity in the expression of their mirth as well as in their general appearance; the clear, shrill tones of the feminine speakers are incessantly ejaculating the most sacred of names; the same arch smile plays on every countenance; the fan is toyed with by all with the same careless grace, and flutters more or less in proportion to the animation of its owner; the same quick movements of surprise or delight are everywhere elicited by the sparkling nothings of the Gaditanian *petit maître*, whose treble runs like a discord among the other sounds. Amid all these displays there is, however, nothing boisterous or unfeminine on the part of Cadiz's daughters; their liveliness, though wanting that subdued tone we deem essential to polished manners, is graceful and becoming in its flights; it is the overflow of spirits which, like the beautiful wild flowers of their own land, are stirred by the lightest breath of air, and, like them, give forth a pleasant rustle when so agitated. At the same time the traveller, if he has indulged in exaggerated notions of Spanish beauty, will here be taught in what it consists. Probably his final impression will be one of disappointment; and even he who has drawn in his imagination a less glowing picture of its charms, will find the reality fall short of his ideal sketch. If he has kept out the pure red and white and the eye of heavenly blue that mark the beauty of a northern sky, he has judged rightly; but after supplying their place with the pale or dusky cheek



of a southern clime, and its eye, which, whether it be wild or gentle, flashing or languid, is always dark, he will need to use his pencil with caution. In truth, the Spanish dame, as regards regularity of feature, and those charms which form beauty of countenance, must yield the palm to the dames of other nations; her attractions centre in her dark glossy hair and in those eloquent eyes, that unite with an ever-varying play of expression in making her wondrously fascinating. In beauty of form, however, she reigns alone; nothing could be more symmetrical or more exquisitely rounded than the shapes of the Gaditanian belles, as they glided or floated—anything but walked—through the mazes of the gay crowd on the promenade; indeed, the Andalusian grace is proverbial in Spain, and the traveller must confess that he has never beheld elegance of motion until he has stood upon an Andalusian Alameda. What it is, can hardly be described by words; it is beyond the power of language to describe those slow and surpassingly graceful movements which accompany every step of the Andaluza; her every attitude is so flowing, and at the same time so unforced, that she seems upborne by some invisible power that renders her independent of the classically moulded foot she presses so lightly on the ground.

Meanwhile, the concourse begins to diminish; group after group drops away; the line of promenaders contracts to a narrow thread, and finally disappears entirely, leaving the Alameda deserted by all but a few who find attractions in its quiet nooks. The stream has, however, only disappeared to rise again in another quarter: the Plaza San Antonio is now the scene to which the shifting throng has transferred its perambulations; and here, beneath the light of lamps, it paces round the

limits of the square, which till a late hour is alive with the sound of moving feet mingled with bursts of merriment, and other tokens of a pleasure-loving people.

Cadiz, like many of the seaports on this coast, may lay claim to the remotest antiquity. Its name has descended to us from the Phœnicians, who called it Gadir, a word which is supposed to have signified in their tongue "a bulwark," and might be well applied to the rocky point on which it stands. That maritime people, half merchant, half corsair, quickly perceived its advantages as a defensible post against all who might be powerless at sea; and, confident in their acknowledged supremacy on that element, were not slow to make the barren rock their own. Here they raised fortifications, and founded a temple which was dedicated to their own divinity, Hercules, the god of the strong hand. From hence it was not difficult to push their commercial enterprises northwards, having now so safe a haven and a rock-built sea-fastness at their command. Voyages more distant than any they had before contemplated were undertaken, even to that Britannia, whose shroud of mist and fogs they were the first to pierce. It is curious to note how the path of commerce has in all ages remained the same, and how that from the West to the East is trodden by the greatest of modern commercial nations in the very footsteps of the ancient people who, without chart or compass, boldly followed it in their course from the East to the West. The halting-places of both nations are likewise nearly the same: Gibraltar is to Britain what Cadiz was to the Phœnicians; it is the half-way-house upon the route, established at the point where danger and delays are most to be apprehended. Malta,

in like manner, was a post of the Phœnicians ; and thus, while we plume ourselves upon the possession of these important stations for our fleets, the acquisition of one of which was the result of a random stroke of war, we pay an involuntary tribute to the wisdom and foresight of the seafaring people by whom they were secured, and each one made the basis of commercial operations.

When the Phœnicians ceased to be merchants and navigators, Cadiz passed into the hands of the Carthaginians, who not only succeeded their parent nation in its maritime greatness, but developed, to an extent unknown before, the resources and power of commerce. It shared, however, the fate of the Peninsula on the triumph of the Roman arms over the mistress of the seas, and became a Roman city in the year 208 B.C. Henceforward it is known only as one of the richest commercial emporiums of the empire. But long after its absorption into the Roman dominions, this city appears to have retained in its manners and customs many traces of its Oriental origin ; then, as now, the usages of the East were too congenial to the climate and character of the people to be eradicated by a change of masters from the soil in which they had taken root. Even in the matter of amusements, it seems to have imported the wanton dances of the East ; for these it was once as famous as it now is for its cachucha and fandango, both of which are indisputably derived from an Oriental source. To the latter, which may be, and occasionally are, danced in a fashion far from decorous, the modern censor may still apply the words in which the Roman satirist reproved the indelicate displays of the Gaditanians in his own age ; the “ *de Gadibus improbis puellæ* ” have preserved but too well not a



few of those free movements which called forth his indignant rebuke.

Under the Arab domination, Cadiz sank into obscurity ; its position placed it out of the line of Arab commerce, which was exclusively directed towards the East and the states of Barbary. Hence the ports on the Mediterranean, such as Gibraltar, Malaga, and Almeria, being the principal outlets for Andalusian manufactures, monopolised the whole traffic with other countries, and rose to a corresponding degree of eminence. When, however, by the discovery of America, the path of commerce turned towards the West, Cadiz could not fail to become the emporium of the new world, and to enter upon a new era of prosperity. From the moment that the treasure-laden galleons began to discharge their precious freights on its quays, it assumed the first place among the ports of Spain, and, notwithstanding the defection of the American colonies, still continues to retain that position. In the wars between Britain and the Spanish monarchy, no town suffered so much as this ; its semi-insular situation particularly exposed it to the assaults of a nation which long and successfully contended with the Spanish navies for the supremacy at sea. The first of these attacks occurred during that period of exhaustion which overtook the Spanish empire upon the destruction of its invincible Armada. That mighty armament was merely the last effort of expiring strength, and on its overthrow "Spain with the Indies" lay prostrate and helpless at the feet of her maritime rivals. Her southern shores were ravaged with impunity by the Barbary corsairs, who landed wherever they chose, wasted her fruitful soil, and carried into captivity all whom the scymitar spared. The traveller still sees on

the bold headlands along the shores of the Mediterranean the remains of the *atalayas*, or watch-towers, from whence a smoke ascended to give notice of the approach of the Moorish vessels, and warn the wretched inhabitants to flee inland. Her northern and western coasts were in like manner swept by the fleets of victorious England. Either in privateering expeditions they lay in wait for and captured her galleons, or, disembarking bodies of troops, assailed her seaports and wasted them with fire. It was in an expedition of the latter nature, only eight years after the wreck of the Armada, that Cadiz was stormed by the English forces and taken by the sword. Among the commanders in that successful exploit were Sir Francis Vere, Sir Walter Raleigh, and the Earl of Essex. It was a subject of debate whether the town should be held by an English garrison; and Sir Francis Vere offered with four thousand men to maintain it against all enemies, but his proposal was rejected, and the town, after being in the possession of the invaders for fourteen days, was abandoned. The same fleet on its return to England landed on the coast of Portugal, and seized the town of Faro in the province of the Algarve. There they found the valuable library of Osorius, who was bishop of the place: this they conveyed to England and bestowed upon the newly-erected library of Oxford.\* It was again assailed in 1702 by a fleet under the command of Sir George Rooke, but without the success which attended the former expedition. The repulse was, however, amply avenged by the capture of Gibraltar two years subsequently.

To Cadiz may be applied Dr. Johnson's definition of a ship; it is a prison with the chance of being

\* Sir William Monson's *Naval Tracts*.

drowned. On every side but one the sea washes the foundations of its walls, which secure it as much from the assaults of the turbulent element as from the ravages of a foreign invader. On the western side, which confronts the Atlantic, a wild scene of warfare is visible whenever the ocean is agitated by storms. The rocky slope at the foot of the ramparts is then white with the breakers that roll up towards the walls, and dash with stunning noise against their solid masonry. At such times, every projecting angle is enveloped in a cloud of spray, which falls upon the interior in cascades of brine, and seems to bode the entrance of the billows that storm without. The sound of this wild uproar penetrates into the centre of the city, and makes itself heard even in the interior of the houses. During the hours of darkness, the effect is peculiarly imposing. If, as Silvio Pellico says, "*svegliarse nella mezza notte è cosa tremenda,*" how much more striking is it to waken at midnight, and hear the silence of one's prison broken by the clamour of an adversary that thunders at its gates without pause or rest! The stillness he deems so awful is then rendered doubly impressive by the distant roar of a warfare which the listener fancies is fraught with peril to himself. Yet these dangers are more apparent than real. Cadiz is founded upon a rock, and, however loudly the Atlantic may rage, is seated upon too sure a foundation to be in dread of its waves. On one occasion, however, its citizens trembled for their own and the city's existence. During the earthquake of 1755, by which the greater part of Lisbon was laid prostrate, the sentinels on the walls of Cadiz descried the sea, at ten miles' distance, rising to the height of sixty feet above the common level, and the huge billow thus

formed advancing with great velocity towards the city. At this sight the whole population were seized with dismay, and, apprehending the total submersion of the town, rushed with the soldiery towards the gate which leads to the low isthmus connecting the town with the main land. Happily, the governor was a man of sense, and perceived the danger of this step. He ordered the gates to be closed, so that few succeeded in gaining the isthmus. Meanwhile, the gigantic wave reached the shore; and dashing among the rocks with a terrible crash, spent its force there ere it reached the walls. It was, however, strong enough to demolish these, and to remove some pieces of heavy artillery to a distance of a hundred feet, and then, sweeping into the town, inundated the lower portion of it. Little damage, however, was done, and the only loss of life occurred upon the isthmus to which I have alluded. All who had retreated there were overwhelmed by the waters and drowned.

Along this isthmus is conducted the road to Chic-lana, the summer resort of the Gaditanians. At all seasons of the year the communication is kept up by omnibus, while, at the same time, it may be reached by water; but, declining both these modes of conveyance, I started, on a clear wintry morning, to traverse the distance on foot. Passing out by the land-gate, I shortly gained the noble arrecife, or causeway, formed on the narrow strip of land that here divides the waters of the bay from those of the Atlantic. On the right hand the deep blue tide stretched far into the horizon, unmarked by sail or shadow; but on the other a variety of objects mingled with the liquid expanse to diversify the prospect; shipping of all nations were crowded together at one point; at another a little



flotilla of fishing-boats were spreading their picturesque lateen sails to the wind ; along the winding shores in sight, white towns and villages seemed to hang upon the edge of the waters, and to be on the verge of sliding into them ; and inland, bold sierras completed the background. As I increased my distance from Cadiz, I passed in succession the outer line of fortifications and forts by which it is defended, and, after a walk of six miles, entered the town of La Isla. A broad street is all that is worthy of notice in this place ; which, though suffering from the vicissitudes of fortune, still boasts of a population of thirty thousand souls. From La Isla there extends towards the south a bleak tract of salt-marshes, dotted with pyramids of salt, which is here formed in large quantities by evaporation, and stored up in that shape. The road, however, avoided this marshy region, by turning to the east, after having crossed by the Puente de Zuazo, the Santi Petri river : the latter stream is, however, more properly to be termed a natural canal between the ocean and the Bay of Cadiz, and, as it cuts across the peninsula upon which that city stands, may be said to convert it into an island.

By the circuitous route taken by the road, Chiclana is six miles distant from La Isla. It is altogether unworthy of its position as the chosen retirement of the Gaditanians during the summer months, for its dirty and dilapidated condition presents a striking contrast to the clean and well-paved streets and the handsome edifices of Cadiz. Not far off, however, is a spot to which every Briton will turn with interest ; the field of Barosa lies to the southward, and I did not delay long to pay it a visit. Taking with me Napier's account of the battle, I wended my way through the

pine-wood which skirts Chiclana on the west and south ; and crossing the broken plain that lies between it and the fiercely contested heights, ascended the latter by an easy slope : this terminated in an abrupt steep towards the sea, on the edge of which stood a roofless and dilapidated hut, once a vigia or watch-tower. Here it was evident that the thickest of war's tempest had descended ; the walls, both on the exterior and interior, were covered with the marks of bullets and shot, not yet obliterated by the lapse of more than thirty years : indeed, so lightly had the finger of time touched the ruin, which was probably the work of that day, that the names and remarks of those who had visited the battlefield immediately after the event, though written in pencil on the walls, were yet fresh and legible. From this spot the course of the fight could be distinctly traced. On the west was the sea, bounded by a line of steep cliffs, at the base of which, however, a firm sandy beach afforded an excellent road for troops. If they pursued this route in a northerly direction, their march would be stopped at the distance of four miles by the channel of the Santi Petri River ; but at the mouth of this a flying bridge had been constructed, and the passage therefore into the Isla could be effected without difficulty. It was towards this point that the allied force of Spaniards and British was tending on the day of battle, their march being directed along a route, which kept them about two miles from the beach. There was, however, no slight danger in this movement. Marshal Victor, with nine thousand troops, was in the woods of Chiclana, and so nigh that he could fall with ease upon the rear of the force crossing the bridge, and probably bring it into a disastrous conflict, as, from the nature of the ground, there was but

scanty space afforded for the defence of the passage. Under these circumstances, General Graham proposed to La Peña, the Spanish commander-in-chief, to hold the height of Barosa, which he justly argued was the key both to defensive and offensive movements: so long as it was occupied by the allied force, no advance could be made by the French, as in that case their flank would be menaced by the detachment on the height. La Peña, however, replied to this reasoning by ordering the British commander to march straight for the Bermeja, a low ridge about midway between the Barosa height and the bridge. This Graham obeyed, in the persuasion that a division of Spaniards was to remain at Barosa; but scarcely had he entered a wood in front of the Bermeja, when La Peña moved off with his Spaniards towards the Santi Petri bridge, leaving only a weak rear-guard to protect the baggage. The French general, who had watched this false step from his forest-lair, immediately sprang forward upon the prey he now deemed his own. While one brigade, under Laval, was directed against the British, another, commanded by himself in person, ascending the Barosa height, dispersed the Spanish rear-guard, captured three of its guns, and bore hard upon the small British force which was left to protect the baggage. Upon notice of the attack reaching Graham, not a moment was lost in countermarching to meet the enemy; but when he reached the plain the key of the field of battle was already in their possession, while Laval's column was close upon his left flank. La Peña was nowhere to be seen. In such a strait, the British general felt that a retreat, if such were possible, would only aggravate the desperate position in which he was placed, and resolved, therefore, to attack without losing an instant. The



troops were hastily formed into two masses, one of which marched straight for Laval's column, the other directed its course against the Barosa height. The former, by a fierce charge, broke the first and second lines of the French, and threw them into irremediable confusion ; but a harder task awaited the second body. On the edge of the ascent they were met by their gallant opponents, and for some time the victory hung in the balance : the fire of the British, however, prevailed ; two French generals fell mortally wounded, and their troops were driven down the hill, with the loss of many soldiers. The British then stood triumphantly on the summit, masters of six guns, an eagle, two generals, both mortally wounded, and 400 prisoners ; but having been twenty-four hours under arms, and without food, were too exhausted to pursue. "While," says Napier, "these terrible combats of infantry were fighting, La Peña looked idly on ; neither sending his cavalry, nor his horse artillery, nor any part of his army, to the assistance of his ally ; nor yet menacing the right of the enemy, which was close to him, and weak." It was a fit sequel to such unworthy conduct, when the Spanish general claimed the victory for himself, and his staff published inaccurate accounts of the battle, accompanied with false plans of the ground, in order to support their assertions. No reasoning, however, or falsification, could extinguish the fact, that not a Spaniard joined in the fight ; while the loss of 1100, in killed and wounded, on the side of the British, attested its severity, and marked on whom the weight of battle had fallen. I have mentioned that the watch-tower on the height bore many traces of the deadly fray around its walls. While roaming over the field of battle, I was surprised to discover other memorials

of its fury, which, like the former, had resisted the effacing fingers of time. In the shallow ravines by which the field is broken, C—— and I found a couple of cannon-balls, which had probably lodged in their sides, and, being detached by the rains, had rolled to the bottom, where we picked them up, half imbedded in the sand. These we carefully preserved as mementos of a day so glorious to the British arms.

## CHAPTER II.

PORT ST. MARY'S.—BODEGAS.—ROAD TO SAN LUCAR.—BRIGAND  
VIS-A-VIS.—PLUNDERED TRAVELLERS.

EL PUERTO SANTA MARIA, or as it is more commonly called for brevity's sake, El Puerto, is, like many other towns in Spain, never seen to better advantage than when distance throws its veil over many accompaniments too matter-of-fact to be picturesque. For this reason, its best point of view is undoubtedly from the ramparts of Cadiz; and looking from the latter town across the bay, which is here some five or six miles wide, it was not difficult to imagine that the "port," with its white walls gleaming in the sunshine, was no unpleasing addition to the landscape on the opposite mainland. Between the towns a couple of small steamers are constantly plying throughout the day; and stepping on board one of these, in less than an hour I was at my journey's end. Before entering the mouth of the Guadalete, which forms the harbour of the town, we had to cross a bar of very ominous character; and this undertaking, even by a steamer, is regarded as a hazardous attempt in bad weather. To small craft and boats the danger is much greater, especially at low water, or when a heavy swell sets in from the Atlantic. Should the reader attempt to cross it, as I once did, under these circumstances, he will learn what is meant by a boat being filled with water. For-

merly it was usual for the boatmen to collect small sums from the passengers, in order to procure masses for the souls of those who had been lost amid the boiling surf; but since the introduction of steamers the custom has been abandoned.

Except the bodegas, or wine-vaults, little is to be seen in the town worthy of note. These bodegas, it must be observed, are very different from the subterranean and rheumatic labyrinths in which it is our pleasure to immure the rosy god. Here they court the light and the sunshine, displaying broad fronts and lofty walls, and really are edifices of such extent and completeness in their arrangements as to rival the first of our manufacturing establishments. Entering one of them, you feel as if some "banquet hall deserted" was now put to humble uses, for much there is to remind one of a higher origin; the roof is high overhead, the walls ponderous and lit by narrow apertures, and from end to end you enjoy a clear view, interrupted only by the solid pillars by which the rafters are sustained. All this height and magnitude of proportion is designed to compass the same object for which we construct underground cellars; in both cases the purpose is to maintain an uniformly even temperature—with this difference, however, that in Spain a fiery sun must be excluded, while in our own rugged clime the enemy to be dreaded is excess of cold. It may sound strangely to call the bodega manufactories of wine; yet the term is not inappropriate; the wine is stored in long ranges of casks piled over each other tier above tier, the uppermost invariably containing the fruits of recent vintages. As the contents of the lower casks are drawn off, more is added from the upper ones, so that a system of constant replenishing is at work, and on no account is a

cask ever drained to the dregs. Hence the lower tier contains the produce of various seasons, all blended together by this process of admixture. Up to this stage of its manufacture the wine is free from foreign ingredients; the next step is to add brandy, to infuse strength—boiled wine, to give any shade of colour that may be desired—richer and older wines, to impart flavour: and when the taste of the market has been thus satisfied, the mixture is called sherry. As a wine-exporting town, the reputation of Port St. Mary's is but of yesterday. Not long ago, it was merely the shipping port of Xeres, from which it is distant about ten miles; but now a great deal of business is transacted by the enterprising merchants who first saw the advantages of its situation, and its prosperity seems manifestly to be on the increase. As far, however, as regards the finer kinds of wines, its older rival must still bear away the palm.

On the edge of the suburbs to the westward stands a spacious convent, in days of yore the property of St. Dominic; but, alas! a mightier than he in Spain has turned him out of house and home, and his patrimony is now the spoil of the state. Seeing the gate open as I passed by, I walked in to ascertain to what uses the place had come at last; for since the suppression of the monastic orders, the greater number of the convents have undergone the strangest of metamorphoses, in all of which there is to be traced an utilitarian character, very much at variance with the precepts and practice of their former occupants: the majority are converted into hospitals, jails, lunatic asylums, penitentiaries, barracks, and so forth, while a few minister to the wants of the mind, having risen into universities and museums. The building was one of those gloomy,

prison-like edifices, with massive square towers at each angle, such as the old Italian masters loved to introduce into the background of their scriptural pieces. The place seemed quite deserted, so I wandered unquestioned through the courts below, and from thence up to the corridors that gave access to each cell. On the basement story I passed into what had evidently been the refectory, a lofty though rather narrow apartment, and as void of ornament as every other part of the building; but it was clear that the fathers no longer feasted there. At the furthest end a wooden stage rose above the floor, and was flanked by certain screens called wings; while a dingy piece of drapery depended from the roof, and was intended to represent a curtain: in short, the wicked world had helped itself to the room, and had transformed it into a theatre. Projecting from one of the sides of the apartment was a pulpit, to which there was a passage by a dark staircase in the wall. Here one of the holy fathers at meal times was wont to read a homily, or passages from devout books, for the edification of the brotherhood as they devoured their commons in silence. As I squeezed myself with difficulty up the narrow passage, I could not help admiring the wisdom of the fraternity in causing the office of reader to be discharged by the most recent member of their community. Common report gave them the credit of living on the fat of the land, and hence it was pretty evident that none but the latest, and consequently the leanest among them, could thrust his person up that narrow flight of steps with any hope of reaching the top.

When all the sights had been exhausted, C—— proposed visiting San Lucar de Barrameda. This is an ancient town, situated at the mouth of the Guadal-



quivir, and in the brighter days of Spain was rather famous as a seaport. It was not far off, being some twelve or fifteen miles distant; and as the road was said to be tolerably good—at least for Spain—we resolved to make our way to it on foot. But in Andalusia, where such a thing as pedestrianism is altogether unknown, our choice excited as much astonishment as if we had proposed a pilgrimage to Mecca. To speak the truth, I rather imagine our sanity suffered in their estimation, for once or twice I caught the exclamation, “Que locos Ingleses!” But in this quarter of the world Englishmen have the reputation of doing all sorts of odd things; and if this was one, I consoled myself by thinking that I was keeping up the national character. On a clear, bright morning, therefore, towards the end of January, we bade adieu to Port St. Mary’s, and soon found ourselves beyond the odours of its narrow and ill-paved streets. We carried arms, as all must do who have no particular fancy for hearing “Stand and deliver!”—a kind of salutation not uncommon upon the roads in Andalusia, and most usually addressed to the unarmed. Against interruptions of such a nature we deemed our double-barrels a sufficient protection, though many of our friends strongly recommended the precaution of taking in addition some armed attendants. At that period, indeed, so great was the insecurity of the road we were about to follow, that the common mode of traversing it was after the fashion of a caravan. At a certain hour assembled all the travellers whom fate commanded to make use of it; they then placed themselves under the protection of an escort, more or less numerous according to the height of their fears or the number of their party. Thus fortified the procession sallied forth, and wound

its way onwards in fear and trembling; and if it reached its destination unassailed, the event was a subject of congratulation to all concerned. For our own part, we rejected all assistance, being influenced thereto by sundry reasons of moment: first and foremost, we had little to lose, and cared less whether or no it departed from us; and in the next place, we well knew that, whatever might be the bold bearing of an escort, too often its practice was to show valour on every occasion but the one when it was most required. Outside of the town we halted to load our guns. Looking back, the view that presented itself was of a high order of beauty. A far off to the right was Cadiz, rearing its glittering spires at the termination of the long low promontory that carries it far into the sea. In the distance the sandy strip which links it to the mainland was lost to view; and all alone, in the midst of the waters, stood the bastioned city, severed by a broad sheet of dark blue from the shore, and seemingly left to the mercy of the Atlantic. On the side nearest us were spread out the waters of its noble bay, which lay at our feet calm and silent as a lake. A few sails sprinkled its burnished surface; some seeking distant ports, but most of them hastening to mingle with a forest of masts which, deep in its bosom, marked the anchorage for shipping. Upon the mainland, the eye ranged over a level country, terminated by the picturesque sierras of Moron and Medina Sidonia; their rugged peaks clothed in that hue of dusky purple so peculiar to Andalusian mountain scenery, and which the rays of a warm sun were unable to dispel.

For the prospect that invited us onwards so much could not be said. We soon lost sight of the ocean,



and entered a wilderness of growing wheat, stretching away on every side for many miles, and as destitute of habitation, tree, or shrub, as the most wintry desert. At the same time the road became a mere track, so that the vehicle which carried our luggage was compelled to make long and tedious detours, in order to avoid the impassable gulfs that yawned at every step. Half-way stands a *venta*, or inn, said to bear but an indifferent character, being, according to report, the resort of such brigands as infest the road. For their purposes the situation is admirably adapted. It stands upon a slight eminence commanding a view of the road on both approaches for a long way, thus giving them ample time to scan the strength of parties travelling, or to make off if danger is nigh. Seeing a peasant at the door, I walked up to him to inquire if any robberies had taken place during the morning. Guessing my purpose, the man came forward, and, without waiting to be questioned, informed me that there was "no novelty"—such being the delicate phrase used in Spain to intimate that there had been neither robbery nor murder on the route. Had I put the question a few hours later, he would have returned me a different answer, as the sequel will show.

Not far from the *venta*, we encountered the convoy from San Lucar. It consisted of eight or nine *calesas* filled with passengers, the whole preceded by a couple of horsemen armed to the teeth with carbines, pistols, and cigars, and looking the beau ideal of stern resolve. If the reader knows not what a *calesa* is, let his imagination picture a machine of a very antique cut. The wheels are high, supporting a body like that of a *cabriolet*, the sides and back being, however, daubed scarlet or yellow, and adorned, besides, with strange

imitations of fruits and flowers. Throw over this a veil of cobwebs, blue mould, rust, mud-splashes of two or three years' growth, and a calesa is then in character. The turn-out, however, is not complete till you have placed between a couple of short straight shafts a lean and withered Rosinante, who steps along to the music of hundreds of small bells which decorate its head and neck. The driver is scarcely less fantastic than his vehicle. He wears a short brown jacket, the back and arms of which are inlaid with cloth of various gaudy hues—scarlet, blue, and yellow being predominant, so that his upper man has much the appearance of a harlequin; next come calzones, usually of black velvet, and open at the knee; while gaily-embroidered leggings of calf-skin, lacing up the outside of the leg, and a conical hat with a spacious brim, complete the costume. There is no seat provided for him, and he therefore sits on the board at your feet, singing, talking, and plying his whip, with a most sovereign contempt for everybody's comfort but his own.

As we proceeded, the road began to improve a little. A gang of galley-slaves was at work upon it—squalid and scowling wretches; some bearing on their heads baskets of sand from a pit hard by, while others were spreading out the material, not with spades or other instruments, but solely with their naked hands. As we passed them, one accosted us in French, begging a cigar or two to lighten his task. On inquiry he proved to be a native of “la belle France.”

“Why are you here?” was our next question.

“For nothing to speak of,” said he, shrugging his shoulders most characteristically; “pour avoir tué un douanier.”

Leaving these miserable outcasts a long way behind

us, the country became as wild a solitude as ever. The only object to arrest the eye within a circuit of many miles was a straggling olive-grove, spreading its dusky foliage over the brow of a low ridge about a mile to our left. As we were looking upon it with something of that interest with which the voyager amid the lonely waste of waters eyes an approaching sail, on a sudden a couple of horsemen started out of its shade, and crossing the country at a rapid gallop, made straight for the road in our front. Such a manœuvre was too strange not to excite our suspicions; all the tales we had heard about banditti and so forth flashed across our minds as we coupled their sudden appearance with the route they were taking. In the hope of satisfying our doubts, we turned to the conductor of our luggage; but Juanito, though extremely talkative, became wonderfully silent on this occasion. "They might or might not be *ladrones*; how was he to know?" That they had, however, some evil purpose in view soon became a matter of no dispute; for, disappearing behind a slight acclivity, behind which the road wound, they were seen no more, though, from the pace at which they were going, they ought to have emerged the next minute into the open ground on our right. It was evident that on the reverse slope of the acclivity before us the suspicious strangers had halted, and that there they intended to await our approach.

In this dilemma we called a council of war. C—— was for marching on; I was of the same opinion, for a couple of men did not give us any concern; but our difficulties arose from the apprehension that they might be scouts stationed to give notice to a larger party concealed from our view: nevertheless, at all hazards, we determined to proceed, knowing that, however out-

numbered, yet with arms in our hands we might come to reasonable terms.

On reaching the summit of the acclivity I have described, our relief was great, when, on looking down, we descried but two horsemen, and these the same we had seen before. About thirty yards to the right of the road they had come to a halt, with bridles in hand and carbines resting on their saddle-bows, ready for instant action. As we descended towards the spot where they were posted, it was pretty evident that they watched intently every step that brought us nearer: still no sound or gesture broke from them to indicate a hostile purpose. Perhaps the cocking of our guns as we came in front—a very disagreeable sound when you know the bullet is destined for yourself—may have had its effect; but at all events they thought it better to let well alone as long as a leaden messenger could reach them. To do them justice, they were as fine a pair of cut-throat vagabonds as one would wish to see; not well enough dressed to be heroes—for I am sorry to spoil the romance of the thing by adding that they were rather out at the elbows; but, on the other hand, their steeds were capital, and in the best condition for exploits on the road. Altogether, with their slouched hats and dark visages, they had the air of men equally well disposed to thrust a hand into one's pocket, or a knife between one's ribs, and whose certain end was a halter or a bullet. As long as we could catch a glimpse of them they were still motionless, and fixed to the same spot and attitude; but as we plodded onwards an intervening ridge hid the place from sight, and we were once more alone on the road. In a short time the white houses and terraced roofs of San Lucar appeared in the distance, to announce the

termination of our march; and in the course of an hour we found ourselves without molestation in the best inn it affords.

After a couple of hours spent in strolling about the streets, we returned to our dinner, which we had ordered to be placed in the coffee-room of the inn. We had scarcely sat down to it when the door was hurriedly burst open, and a man with a countenance brimful of importance rushed into the middle of the room.

"Have you heard the news, señores?" said he, addressing himself to the whole party, who stared aghast at the interruption. "Three calesas, coming from Port St. Mary's, and full of passengers, have just been robbed! Here they come!" he added, hearing the rumbling of wheels outside; and darted away as abruptly as he had entered.

We followed him with no less speed to the gate of the inn, where were drawn up the plundered vehicles, surrounded by a crowd eagerly listening to the narrative of the disaster. Two or three of the despoiled travellers were also there, lamenting over empty pockets, and watches and purses departed to return no more. One of the party, a colonel in the army, in the grief of his heart took to bed, and would not be comforted. It is true he was a sufferer to some extent, his loss consisting of a watch valued at fifty pounds, and a new cloak,—an article of apparel which in Spain is rather costly. From him we obtained next morning an account of the circumstances attending the robbery.

It appeared, from comparing notes, that they were stopped not far from the lonely spot selected for performing a similar operation on ourselves. The mode by which it was effected was rather curious. One of the escort having lingered a long way behind, there



remained but another man to guard the convoy. On a sudden three men on horseback galloped up : nobody could imagine from whence they came, though I believe they had concealed themselves under a bridge that spans a shallow stream crossing the road. Without pausing, or testifying any sinister intentions, the new-comers merely interchanged the "Vaya usted con Dios!" or "God be with you!" the invariable salutation of travellers in Spain, and passed onwards at the same pace. The next moment, however, they returned, sending before them the ominous words, "Boca abajo," or "Down upon your mouth." At these dreaded sounds the affrighted travellers, colonel and all, threw themselves with their faces on the ground, knowing too well the consequences of disobeying that terrible mandate. In a trice they were relieved by unseen hands of everything of value; and being sternly told not to stir, as they respected their lives, remained in that helpless posture for some minutes.

In the meantime their solitary man of valour displayed the highest discretion : he put spurs to his horse and rode off; but whether he retired to save himself from the fate of his plundered charge, or whether he went to summon his companion, is a point he alone can clear up. Certain it is, however, that the two worthies returned only when the mischief was done, and pursuit fruitless. All that they did was to raise up the prostrate travellers, and point out to them in the distance the figures of the robbers, who were scouring over the country at the top of their horses' speed. From the description furnished us by our informant, we did not entertain a doubt that the couple who a few hours previously had attempted to try our nerves were concerned in this attack. One of them, we re-

marked, wore a white hat; and such of the travellers as dared to steal a glance, remarked the like on the head of one of their spoilers.

Subsequently the two increased their number to eight or ten, and spread the greatest terror over this and the other roads in the vicinity; but although I had occasion to traverse them more than once, by night as well as by day, I was always fortunate enough to escape without challenge.



## CHAPTER III.

SAN LUCAR DE BARRAMEDA.—ITS COTO.—DEER-SHOOTING.—  
EL PALACIO.—THE STRAYED CAMEL.—LUCKY HIT.

THERE are two towns in Andalusia that bear the sainted name of San Lucar: the one styled, for distinction sake, "La Mayor," or the greater—so called because, like *lucus a non lucendo*, in reality it is *not* the greater—and the other, the town of which I now treat. This has also its sobriquet, being termed "Barrameda," and, of the two, best sustains the credit of its patron: at all events, there are observable in it fewer symptoms of decay; and this remark, as applied to Spanish towns, is tantamount to awarding them the palm of excellence.

It is certainly a fine old place, full of remembrances of other scenes and times; guarded both within and without by gloomy old convents, all the gloomier now since their life has departed—if indeed that could be called life that wore its weary chains behind gratings and walls, and was dead to the hopes and fears, the joys and affections, of mortality. It is here that the Guadalquivir, or the "great river" of the Arabs, finishes his course; and the town spreads its dwellings for the twenty thousand inhabitants it is said to contain, partly on a narrow flat bordering the river, and partly on a rising bank overlooking its broad tide and a wide prospect to the north. From all points its situation is highly picturesque—particularly so as you

approach it by the water, and see houses rising above each other in terraces mingled with spires, towers, and gardens.

From the earliest date this seaport was of some note in the maritime history of Spain. On the sandy beach that forms a firm pathway to Bonanza, about a mile higher up the river, the Roman galleys were wont to be drawn up; and by Roman superstition a temple to Hercules was erected near Chipiona, a small village a league distant to the westward. Previous, however, to their coming, the Phœnician and Carthaginian mariner might have been seen on the strand in busy trade with the rude Celtiberians, and trafficking his wares for the precious metals and stone, for which Spain was then as famous as was its own Peru in later times. More recently still, when the power of the Arabs was in its zenith, this remote haven was visited by the terrible Northmen.

After having been the scourge and terror of the northern seas, their fleets descended to this low latitude; and, undismayed by the two thousand miles of stormy distance that rolled between them and their homes, and forbade every hope of succour, the bold Sea-kings disembarked here, and carried fire and sword far inland. In their progress, they ascended the river as high as Seville, which they sacked and burnt; and laden with spoil, returned to their ships. The discovery of America, however, did more than anything else to swell the fortunes of this place, which became for a season the resort of the treasure-laden galleons. Its citizens, in consequence, waxed great and prospered, though somewhat at the expense of their fair fame—or else Sancho Panza has sadly calumniated them, when he styles their town a den of rogues. These

were its golden days, departed never more to return. Since that epoch, so fatal to Spain's resources and dominion, when her American colonies burst from the hands that vainly strove to retain them, the sights most common in the towns that once participated in the riches of the New World, are empty warehouses, and quays overgrown with grass. San Lucar, among the rest, has cause to mourn that the wealth of the Indies now flows into other channels; a few coasters now suffice for its trade, its custom-house is the mansion of solitude, and its merchants are a paltry few. In one respect, however, it may be said to have become a gainer by the change, as in point of character it is now no worse than the neighbouring cities; the vultures no longer scent the galleons.

The first object which C—— and I visited was the old Moorish castle, which rises from the brow of the slope by which the upper is divided from the lower town. Our knock at an old tottering gate was answered by a wild-looking youth, who came forth from some nook in the court-yard, and shouldered one of the leaves aside. While engaged in this work, which was one of some time and trouble, his teeth held a crust of bread, which he stopped now and then to gnaw and tear, somewhat after the style of a wolf at its meal. As soon, however, as the gate closed behind us, the spirit of hospitality fell upon him: with that grace which all Spaniards, the lowest not excepted, display on such occasions, his morsel of a crust was extended towards us, and, making a low salutation, he pressed us to share it with him. We declined his offer with as much formality as if it had been to the banquet of a grandee, adding the customary formula, "Buen provecho," or "Much good may it do you." Then following him

across the courtyard, we ascended to the top of a huge octagonal tower, whose battlements overhang the steepest part of the bank. From the summit, which had been converted by the French during the War of Independence into a station for a telegraph, we cast our eyes over a wide prospect. On every side but one, a tame and uninviting landscape presented itself; for the view ranged over chalky fields in the immediate vicinity of the town, to flats of a sickly green higher up the river. But directly in front, and on the other side of the Guadalquivir, was a tract of forest land, that, from its singular contrast to the surrounding scenery, instantly arrested our eyes. "That," said our guide, "is the Coto of San Lucar; it is a despoblado, and extends backwards from the river for seven or eight leagues; a lonely place it is, and as full of deer, wild boars, and mountain cats, as the sea is full of fish; vaya! in all Spain there is no better place for game than the Coto of San Lucar." As we were still gazing on the scene, which struck me as coming nearer to my impression of a wilderness than anything I had hitherto seen, the sun shone out strongly from behind a cloud, and showed us that it was a region of sand. Here and there the sandy particles were tossed into yellow hillocks, but generally a growth of low forest and underwood clothed the surface; and the whole was the hard-won gains of time, wrested during the lapse of ages from the Atlantic that thunders on the west, and still threatens to recover its lost domain.

"Wild boars and deer!" said C——, as we were cautiously descending the broken staircase of the tower; "what splendid sport! a day's shooting there would be an event in one's life."

Although little of a sportsman myself, I cordially

echoed his wish: my acquaintance with Andalusia having been as yet confined to its ancient cities and still more ancient roads, I was anxious to see something of its wilds; and this desolate expanse of sand and forest—a fragment, apparently, of some African desert cast by a convulsion of nature on the shores of Spain—was just one of those solitudes with which the province was said to abound, and which I had long desired to explore. We exerted ourselves therefore to obtain the necessary permission to use our guns within its bounds, for, as it by name implies, the Coto is a preserve, and was at the time rented by a party of gentlemen from its proprietor, the Duke of Medina Sidonia; ere long, through the kindness of a friend, our wishes were gratified.

The day previous to our departure was one of busy preparation on the part of C——, who, from the style in which he ordered in provender, seemed to regard our few days' sojourn in the Coto as something akin to wintering at the North Pole. Before nightfall the floor of our apartment groaned beneath a pile of hams, bread, sausages, and other viands, which he eyed with the satisfaction of a mind now at ease: however, after we started, the thought flashed across him that pepper and salt were forgotten—and, true enough, these condiments were wanting. The discovery was the subject of many a bitter lamentation, until we found that the Coto could supply all these articles and many more; and in truth his provident cares were wholly unnecessary, as our guns furnished us with the substantial requisites for a repast, and everything else was to be obtained at the lodges at which we took up our abode. The above formed a load for a “macho” which was to serve as our beast of burden; its conductor was a

bare-footed youth, half sailor, half landsman in costume, and I believe in vocation ; and all being arranged, at two o'clock the next day we were in the ferry-boat that traverses the river. The huge lateen sail was hoisted by a couple of half-naked boatmen ; and, a brisk wind blowing at the time, in less than ten minutes our keel touched the sand on the other side. A few steps in the deep sand quickly shut out from view our place of landing ; and while the noise and bustle attending our getting on shore were still ringing in our ears, we entered a solitude deep and unbroken except by the sounds we ourselves created. We had passed into a wood of pines—not the tall and stately giants of my own land, but a pigmy race of misshapen trunks and twisted limbs. The fantastic contortions of the sylvan throng had a singular effect, and almost led imagination to believe that they imbibed some poisonous potion from the barren soil on which they grew, and were writhing in pain from the draught.

Keeping the river on our right hand we toiled through sand for more than an hour, and then broke off sharply to the left, conducted by a path that dived into the depths of the wood. After we had plodded on wearily for some miles, sometimes by sandy mounds bared of vegetation, and sometimes wading through shallow lagoons, dusk began to deepen the shade of our forest-covert ; still there was no prospect of the lodge where we were to be housed for the night. By and by, in answer to our repeated inquiries, it came out that our attendant had only been once before on the track, and that long ago ; next he admitted that he might have mistaken it ; and finally confessed that he must have done so. This was unpleasant news, particularly as night was coming on ; but after



consulting for a few moments we determined to push on, as it was probable the path would terminate at some dwelling: at the same time we were far from relying with confidence on such a hope, for we knew that in this region houses were few and far between, and after all we might miss them in the dark. However, it was our only plan, except retracing our route, which we felt no desire to do; and, as the event proved, such a step would have been the most unfortunate for us. We had proceeded only a mile farther, when the sound of scattered shots was heard in the distance; the reports gradually drew nearer, and at length a party of seven or eight sportsmen came into view, bending their steps in our direction. They proved, as we anticipated, to be a party of the lessees of the preserve: some were C——'s acquaintances, and, after the usual explanations and inquiries, we joined their numbers. It was a fortunate circumstance for us our meeting with them; it appeared we had overshot our destination by three miles, and there was no other roof within a nearer distance than twelve or sixteen. As yet I had never made my bivouac in the open air, and had looked forward with some misgivings to the possibility of such an occurrence: subsequent experience, however, relieved me from these apprehensions, and I am bound to confess that many a worse couch have I found than among the wilds of the province; a grassy plot was all I needed, and then, wrapped in my manta, the exquisite summer night of Andalusia my only roof, and while the air was fragrant with the perfume of the wild flowers, seldom have I courted sleep in vain.

Night had completely closed in before we reached our habitation. On the way we were introduced to



Manuel Toño, the guarda or keeper of the preserve. Manuel was a spare though sinewy little man, with a keen dark eye, and a countenance expressive of as much openness and honesty as could be thrown into a set of features that were far from regular. He spoke, like many of the lower orders of the province, with a thick guttural accent—a peculiarity he probably inherited from his Moorish ancestors; to us it was new and strange, and we experienced considerable difficulty in understanding his speech, and in comprehending his directions when we were afterwards under his pilotage. Housed and refreshed, dinner in due course made its appearance. Many and various were the dishes handed round, and though on the whole we contrived to make a substantial meal, there were not a few preparations that would have driven a Ude or Soyer frantic. One still comes across my memory like a nightmare; it was the sopa. In a huge copper caldron, which occupied the place of a tureen at the bottom of the table, I descried a thick pasty substance, which, on inquiry, I was told was the soup; it was brought to table in this fashion—the caldron being the vessel in which it was boiled—in order to be eaten in all its perfection. As far as I could ascertain, bread sodden in hot oil formed the foundation of the mess, to which garlic moreover lent its odours; the surface was garnished with poached eggs resting upon a stratum of wild asparagus, a vegetable which those who have once tasted will not speedily forget, the apples of the Dead Sea being scarcely so bitter. C—— and I were the first to be supplied with a liberal portion of the uninviting compound. As the fumes of it ascended to our nostrils, we cast rueful looks upon our plates and at each other, which could hardly have escaped the notice of our entertainers, had

they not been too busily engaged in despatching their own shares : long before ours disappeared, the majority had been helped twice or thrice to this dainty, and, in fact, the caldron was not dismissed until it was completely emptied. For ourselves, after the first dose, we escaped pretty well, by alleging, for want of a better reason, that it was not the "costumbre" in England to be helped twice to soup. There is a wonderful power in the phrase "*es costumbre*," as the traveller in Spain quickly learns. He finds it, in his way, sometimes a stumbling-block, sometimes a valuable ally. Inquire the origin of some popular superstition, or usage of society, and lo, "*es costumbre*" appears as a satisfactory explanation ; or point out how things may be improved, and how they are managed better or differently in your own or other countries, and you have for answer a quiet shake of the head, with the words "*No es costumbre aquí*." In truth few Spaniards trouble their minds with investigations or reasonings on these matters ; generally speaking they are contented with treading in the footsteps of their ancestors as regards national usages ; and if they display a love of change, it is rather in the political world than in those customs by which society is governed. This clinging to the past is unquestionably a national characteristic, and to it we owe the fact that Spain is at this day, perhaps, the most interesting country in Europe.

Her daily life is, as near as can be, the same that is painted in the pages of Cervantes or Lesage ; in all that we see or hear, we are constantly reminded of their descriptions : and though at first it is difficult to conceive such a thing, we are brought to confess that we behold a state of society such as it existed 200 years ago ; the roads, the inns, the robbers, the salons, sere-

nades, picaroons, compliments, are in fact altered so little by the lapse of this long period, that one can hardly describe them without appearing to copy from the immortal works of these authors. The effect of this upon the observer is at first rather singular: having been long accustomed to consider the scenes and characters in "Gil Blas" and "Don Quixote" either as the creations of fancy or delineations of a past age, he is unprepared for their constant occurrence around him; he is struck with surprise to find men thinking and acting in a way nowise differing from that of the fictitious personages with whom he is conversant, and for a time can hardly credit his senses, so unreal does everything appear. After this impression wears off, there remains the conviction that Spain is the land of incident and adventure; a conviction that deepens the more he mingles with its people, and, as a spectator or actor, is introduced to strange passages—far stranger than any that have sprung from the imagination of her novelists.

Dinner over, coffee was introduced, followed by cards, the never-failing resource of an evening in Andalucia. Knowing little of tresillo or monte, we left our friends to the enjoyment of their favourite games, and took the opportunity of adjourning to the kitchen, where a bright fire of logs was blazing on the hearth. Here were assembled Manuel and his family, busily engaged in preparing the double-barrels for the morrow's sport. With the former, whom he found to be as communicative as he could desire, C—— kept up an animated discourse touching the noble science of woodcraft as practised in these regions. I refrain from giving the information he imparted, as the description of what took place on the following day will convey to the reader a sufficiently correct idea of the mode by which the

deer are hunted in the Coto. In the course of the conversation, Manuel called in an old deerhound, who came up to him with the confidence of a favourite. Its neck was covered with scars, with each of which was connected a tale of prowess he delighted to tell. This veteran of the chase appeared feeble and stiff, and scarcely able to crawl, from the effects of wounds and old age; but on remarking this to Manuel, he bade us reserve our judgment until we saw him in the field, "For, though old," said he, "he is a beast of much fire" ("Mucho fuego tiene, mucho"). In size and shape he was altogether different from the deerhound of Scotland, partaking very much of the appearance of a mastiff, and in no points approaching to the wiry and powerful forms of the Scottish breed.

The day was roused, when the morrow came, not with the sound of the echoing horn, but after a fashion which, once prevalent in the Highlands, I was surprised to find existing in temperate Spain. An attendant waked us by presenting a cup of strong waters—for the purpose, I presume, of fortifying our nerves for the coming onslaught. Immediately after breakfast we left the lodge: a picturesque and sequestered retreat it was, and one more to the taste of the sportsman could hardly be conceived. It was a long low building, occupying an opening in the heart of a woodland scene. At one end was the accommodation for the sportsmen—a sitting apartment, and two others fitted up with camp-beds after the fashion of a barrack; the other end was the property of Government, and, as an inscription testified, was a station for carabineros, or the preventive service. Surrounding it was a narrow carpet of green sward, diversified by a shallow lagoon on the west, and a few scattered wild fig-trees, whose

silvery stems had a striking effect in contrast with the sombre mass of pines that formed the background. In a few moments we lost sight of this oasis of verdure—for an oasis in truth it was, being speedily environed by woody knolls. While we are winding in single file along the path—a goodly company of eight or ten horsemen, not to mention as many followers on foot—I shall embrace the opportunity to describe the costume and equipments of the former portion of the party. Yesterday, at table, they were peaceful citizens, clad in the modern garb; now they sit on their saddles, their outward man so altered by means of sombreros, jackets, and scarlet sashes, that the stranger might readily imagine them to be a horde of bandits proceeding to their rendezvous. First, however, and foremost rides Manuel, his upper man clad in a zamarra, or black sheep-skin jacket, a red sash wound round his waist; his nether man is encased in brown shorts and leathern leggings; beneath the sombrero he has tied round his head, as is universally done by the peasantry, a bright coloured handkerchief, the ends of which float over his shoulders. Then follow the señores, who are similarly attired, with some unimportant variations only as to the colours and material of their costume; to this some add a gaudy Valencian manta, usually of a flaring scarlet or yellow; this at present rests upon the saddle-bow, but when need is, may be converted into a cloak, blanket, or coverlet. All and sundry of the hidalgos shoulder a double-barrel; one or two desperate characters, however, carry a brace, with ammunition in proportion, and in the folds of their sashes there is generally thrust a cuchillo del monte. This latter is so useful a weapon, and so well fitted for the sports which place life and limb in jeopardy, that I



am surprised it has not been adopted by those lovers of danger who glory in giving battle to the wild tenants of the jungle or backwoods. The "mountain knife," for so it is called, is a kind of dirk rather more than a foot in length; the haft, which is a few inches long, is round, and tapers away gradually so as to admit of being fixed in the muzzle of a gun. In fact, it is a revival of the bayonet in the earliest stage of its invention, which was simply a weapon like this thrust into the muzzle of a musket: the modern fashion of fixing it was a later improvement; and some of my readers may remember the name of that battle with which the last century opened, wherein a British regiment, while advancing to the charge with the old weapon, was more than staggered by a heavy fire thrown in by their opponents, who for the first time used the musket after the improved mode by which a volley could be discharged while the bayonet was attached to it. As a substitute, however, the cuchillo in the mouth of a gun is not to be despised, and would make a formidable weapon in the hands of the sportsman who might be attacked by a wounded beast of prey before he had time to reload.

On we went in silence, among a succession of hillocks and hollows clothed with dwarf pines that emitted a delightful fragrance—next toiling for many furlongs through smooth and bleaching sands, and once or twice crossing shallow ponds of no great extent. On these occasions a laughable scramble would ensue among the followers for places at the croupe of the equestrians: those who succeeded sometimes exemplified the truth, that it is as difficult to keep as it is to attain an exalted station; for the animals to which they clung, sometimes disliking the double burden, managed to unseat them by kicking and plunging, and off they rolled into

the water amid the merriment of the party. Manuel at length halts, and proceeds to dispose of his forces for action : for that purpose he used no words, as silence was enjoined, lest the game might be scared, but a multitude of nods and signs, which we translated into English the best way we could. Giving our horses in charge to the attendants, the whole party followed him stealthily, and one after another took up their stations at spots he indicated, and always under cover of a bush, tree, or bank. C—— and I were the last to be placed, and formed the extremity of a wide semicircle of ambushed sportsmen. After placing us about fifty yards apart from each other, and cautioning us to lie quiet until we heard a shot in front, and by no means to fire into the interior of the circle, lest we might injure some of the beaters, he departed by a circuitous route to join his followers, and aid them in driving the deer in our direction. Presently the signal sounded, and we waited long in breathless silence, with our expectations wound to the highest pitch. At last several shots were heard in succession, coming from the centre of the crescent, but in our quarter not a leaf was stirring. Suddenly a small herd of hinds and fawns appeared on the crest of a sandy acclivity in our front, and dashed down towards a narrow glade that lay between the thickets in which C—— and I were respectively ensconced. On catching a glimpse of the former they wheeled towards my side, again retreated on seeing me barring the way, and at last halted between us in the greatest perplexity. As they were thus huddled together, nothing could have been more easy than to have disposed of one or two of them, but such would have been an infraction of the laws of the chase, which forbids a shot being fired at



any but bucks ; they were therefore permitted to pass without molestation. Soon after Manuel rode up and informed us that the ambuscade was at an end. The whole party of sportsmen then joined us, their Andalusian vivacity nowise damped by their ill-luck—for they had missed everything at which they had fired—and in a body we moved off to another locality ; here a second circle was formed, the same precautions as before being used. As far, however, as we were concerned, our patience was exercised to no purpose ; the shooting was almost entirely confined to the centre of the line, towards which the game appeared invariably to incline. C——, I believe, got the chance of a shot, which he lost through a misadventure : he was fortifying his patience by the aid of a cigar, when a buck bounded past him ; hastily raising his gun, it touched the cigar ; the cigar burnt his cheek ; and, as a consequence, his shot smote off the top of a tree some ten yards distant.

Yet there was much around and above us to compensate for our want of sport ; there was the picturesque of our positions, always varying in their character ; sometimes stretched on the flat summit of a mound of drifted sand, and commanding a mingled scene of open smooth sands and tangled thicket ; or crouching behind a crooked pine in the bed of a deep ravine, shut out from day by the bristling arms and sombre foliage of the masses that clung to the sides ; then again there was the utter stillness of nature, into which we plunged ere the voices of our companions had scarce rung out of our ears ; and to crown all, the warmth of the February sun, which, unlike that of northern climes, set the blood in motion, and communicated to the air a freshness and elasticity that braced

every nerve. With what an exhilarating effect did it breathe upon our spirits, causing us to look upon everything with an eye of enjoyment ! All this more than repaid us for our long watchings and our oft-repeated negatives to the inquiries of our Spanish friends if game had crossed our stations. On the other hand, a strange fatality appeared to accompany their firing : from first to last they discharged forty or fifty shots without touching a creature ; and from what I heard the deer sometimes brushed past so closely that it was a matter of surprise how it was possible to miss them.

On one occasion I was roused to the *qui vive* by an extraordinary commotion among the bushes in front of me ; the boughs parted and snapped as if some ponderous animal was ploughing its way through them. Doubting not that the patriarch of the herd was to come forth, I raised my gun for a steady aim, but it was only to behold the rolling eye of one of those half-wild bulls that roam at large among the scattered pastures of this waste. His eye was speedily attracted by the scarlet hue of my sash, one of the virtues of which colour, as is well known, is to provoke the ire of bulls. Accordingly he stamped, pawed the sand, and laid his head to the ground with so much malice prepense in the fiery glances he shot, that I was strongly tempted to send him a bullet in return. I contented myself, however, with a passive act of hostility in reply to these ominous demonstrations, with what in polite parlance would have been termed a decided cut. I feigned not to perceive him, but the ill-mannered brute would not take the hint ; he came up to the other side of the bush that separated us, and while I retreated round it, followed at my heels, occasionally jerking his horns into the air after a fashion

that intimated as plainly as language itself, that he was enjoying by anticipation the pleasure of launching my person from them. How long we might have continued to revolve round the bush I know not—probably till one or the other dropped down from giddiness; at length a shot fired close by caused him to desist and dart off at the top of his speed.

It is from the animals who wander in this savage state over the wild flats bordering the Guadalquivir, or amid the unprotected pastures of the interior, that the bull-rings of Seville and the other towns of the province draw their supplies. Those who are destined for this butchery in sport are allured from their native pastures by means of tame oxen, and the united herd of wild and tame animals is driven to the pens adjoining the ring; here the bulls are parted from the others, and each one confined in a separate crib. Those, however, whom it is designed to slay or secure are caught by pursuing the following method, which I describe as it was told to me. The vaquero, mounted on horseback, and wielding in his right hand his garrocha, or goad—the same weapon which the picador uses in the arena—gives chase to the animal he has selected from the herd. Fleet though it be, and of a race of first-rate leapers—for I have seen some bulls clear the barrier of the ring, the height of which could not be less than five feet—his Andalusian steed soon overtakes it: when sufficiently near, he plants the point of his goad close to the root of its tail. Watching his opportunity, he then manages by a well-timed push to tilt the animal forwards; on thus being thrown off its balance, it stumbles, and finally measures its length on the ground. Ere it has recovered from the suddenness of the fall, the vaquero is on

his feet beside it, ready to bind it—which he finds no difficulty in doing—or to dispose of it in whatever manner he thinks fit.

It was late ere we bent our steps towards our quarters for the night. The gaiety of our Andalusian friends was no whit diminished by the fact that they had expended no inconsiderable amount of powder and shot, for which “no returns” were forthcoming. C—— and I, however, relieved our feelings, which were of a different nature, by grumbling a little, more especially at being always placed at the wings of the semicircle, which were confessedly the worst places for sport; but, in justice to Manuel, it is but fair to add that in this matter he could have no option. The others were his masters, and to them of right belonged the best places.

The amusements of the day were, however, not yet concluded. At a short distance from the lodge, preparations were made for assailing another description of game, whose traces we had frequently encountered in the course of our movements. These were the wild boars and swine of the Coto: I call them wild because they were so denominated by our friends, but in correct parlance they could only be styled a semi-savage race. The breed had been crossed, and, as it was said, improved, by the introduction of a foreign variety, one of the results of which was to divest them so much of their roving habits, that their wanderings were now almost exclusively limited to the vicinity of the lodge. The persons of the new species, which was white, and their descendants, who were a piebald race, we received strict injunctions to regard as particularly sacred, and on no account were we to make them marks for our “vile guns.”

Their haunts being well known, it was not long before a great shouting announced their approach to the ground where we had taken up positions. The first object visible through the trees was the figure of one of our attendants, brandishing, as he spurred his horse, a long goad: every instant I expected to see it hurled at the terrified porkers, who preceded him by some twenty or thirty yards, and were audibly expressing their discontent at this unusual treatment. On they came, grunting and squeaking in chorus, direct for a shallow pond, on one side of which stood guard a fellow-sportsman, while I was posted on the other: if they continued to pursue the same direction, they had of necessity to cross the sheet of water that lay between us. Including young and old, there might be about a dozen animals, racing together as close as a pack of well-trained hounds, and, as I have already mentioned, giving tongue after their own fashion. As they were thus crowded together, one might have brought down two or three by simply firing into the midst; but this could not have been done without bringing down some of the sacred pigs, which were so intermingled with the others that the whole mass resembled a chess-board, black alternating with white. With the certain prospect, therefore, of slaying one of these should I miss, I aimed at a black pig in the very centre of the squad, which having reached the brink of the water, halted for an instant, being manifestly loth to plunge into the pure element. Upon firing, the grunting and squeaking waxed longer and louder, and with one accord the animals scrambled into the water, and, sometimes swimming and at others wading, gained the other shore: their good humour was by no means increased by the compulsory purification they underwent, for,



notwithstanding their haste, they turned and snapped at each other, and continued to do so as long as they were within sight. In the next moment up came our attendants, headed by the old dog of which I have made mention: the ardour of the chase had imparted to him all the activity of youth, and dashing through the water gallantly, he and the horsemen were in a twinkling lost to our eyes among the woods beyond.

We were engaged in discussing the events of the day before the door of the lodge, when it was announced that Manuel was coming towards us, bearing a cochino on his shoulders. He soon appeared with the animal, round which the whole party gathered with no little curiosity, to view the sole trophy of the day's marchings and counter-marchings: but, alas! small cause was there for rejoicing; the cochino was not of the right sort,—it was white, or rather, piebald,—and, after a due investigation, mine was pronounced to be the fell hand that slew it. I remember, however, making a vain attempt to transfer the merit of its fall to my fellow-sportsman who had likewise fired, by showing that the leg of the animal was broken on the side nearest him; but he was strangely unambitious of the honour, and proved that the ball had entered on the inside of the leg, and consequently could only have proceeded from my gun. I consoled myself, however, for the mistake, by reflecting that it is no easy matter to hit an object seventy yards distant, with a ball from a smooth barrel; and, moreover, there was the satisfaction of knowing that some were gainers by the shot. The cochino was handed over to Manuel, to whom it was an acceptable prize, and no unwelcome addition to the family puchero.

Next morning C—— and I were on our way to

the most distant quarter of the Coto. Although less likely to meet with deer in that direction, we were certain to have all the sport to ourselves, and to enjoy it unfettered by the restrictions of yesterday, which in truth we found rather irksome in their nature. For the first league we toiled through sands heaped by the winds into mounds and hillocks; their sloping sides were smooth as if caused by the hand of art, and upon the tell-tale surfaces we could trace the foot-prints of all the animals with which the preserve abounds. Here was the heavy plunge of the deer into the yielding particles; in close contact was to be seen the stealthy foot-fall of the wild cat scarcely imprinted on the sands; and beside it the larger and deeper impression of the gato montes, a species of tiger-cat found in this region.

Besides these, the surface was marked in many places with the angular impressions caused by the feet of land-birds and wild-fowl. Upon this spectacle the geologist would look with an eye of interest. It would recall to his mind those footmarks of an antediluvian creation which are daily brought to light in the sandstone formations, and would clearly point out to him how such were formed. Here, it was only necessary for an infiltration of water to take place, and the sand, along with its many impressions, would be converted into stone; the traces of the deer and the feline race would then remain stereotyped for the benefit of future ages, just as those of tortoises and various extinct species have been for ours.

The white tower, our journey's termination, was visible for hours before we reached it: we saw it from a great distance, standing alone in the midst of a dreary flat country clothed with a dense brushwood.



Its title, however, was imposing—El Palacio ; and in reality there was some less questionable foundation than taste or fancy for this regal appellation, for it had once given shelter to a crowned head. The time was, when this treeless waste was the site of a noble forest of cork-trees, now laid low by the axe of the charcoal-burner ; and hither, when the greenwood was in its prime, came Philip the Fourth to chase the deer, which were then as numerous as now they are rare, since a leafy shade no longer conceals their haunts. The monarch with his retinue was entertained by his noble host, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, with all the stately magnificence of a Spanish grandee, and for the time all the luxurious enjoyments of a metropolis were assembled round this remote spot. The house we found more comfortably fitted up in the interior than we had been led to expect ; it was however rented by some gentlemen of Xeres, who came from thence to spend some weeks of the summer season, and on learning this we were not surprised to behold various improvements which raised it above the rank of a mere sporting lodge. The floor of one of the rooms was planked,—a luxury almost unknown in Andalucia ; and in conformity with our notions of comfort we selected this for our apartment ; the brick floors of the province, however pleasant in summer, have during winter a cheerless aspect, besides being cold and comfortless even when covered with matting, as is frequently done.

In a paddock adjoining the house we were surprised to see half-a-dozen camels at large. These, on inquiring, we found were the property of the enterprising lessee of the pastures in the Coto, and had been introduced by him from the Canaries, where they are in

common use. On the sandy soil of this district they cannot fail to feel as much at home as among their native deserts, and certainly their presence here will be a boon to the community, as well as being in singular keeping with the nature of the country.

"Señores," said the keeper of the Palacio, from whom we obtained the preceding information, "Señores, I will tell you a circumstance respecting one of these camels that will make your worships laugh. One night it escaped from the paddock, and strayed across the dehesa till it came near a village a long way from this. And so, about the break of day, there came two countrymen out of the village to proceed to their labours in the fields, and all of a sudden they saw in their path this animal, which, doubtless, is a creature of a very strange appearance to those who have never seen or heard of it. So the men were seized with much fear, and ran to a tree hard by, from behind which they watched its movements.

" 'What can it be, Curro?' said one.

" 'It's a whale,' replied Curro, 'come on shore to devour us and the village.'

" 'Hombre, no—it's worse than that: it's a soul from purgatory! '\*

" 'Speak to it, then,' said Curro, whose teeth were rattling like castanets on hearing this announced.

" 'How can I,' answered his companion, 'when I don't know Latin?'

"Nevertheless, señores, he called aloud to it, and said, 'O soul from purgatory, if you are in pain, or if

\* Among other superstitions, the vulgar in Spain believe that souls in purgatory assume the shapes of various animals, generally those of an ignoble kind, such as wolves, donkeys, and so forth.

anything lies heavy on your conscience, tell us, and the priest shall say masses for the peace of your troubled spirit.' But the poor animal, hearing the voices of men, with whose presence it was familiar, directed its steps towards the spot from whence the sounds proceeded; whereupon the two were filled with greater fear than before.

" 'Stop!' roared Curro; 'stop, and harm not innocent men; I have my escopeta in my hand, and I warn you I will fire if you advance nearer, for we shall defend our lives to the last.'

" However, it still continued to approach, regardless of his threat, so that at length he pointed his escopeta at it and fired, but without doing any injury, though it was very near; and then the two fled as if for their lives, and when they reached the village raised such an outcry that the whole population seized their arms, believing that the facciosos were upon them. At last, the true cause of the alarm was ascertained, and some of the people sallying forth, caught the animal, and secured it until those in search arrived, by whom it was brought back here."

The following day we devoted to the pursuit of caza menor, or small game, which was in great abundance here; the caza mayor, or large game, we reserved for the morrow, intending then to wind up with a search for the deer, which the keepers affirmed were not unfrequently to be met with. Nowhere had I seen rabbits in such numbers as here; the place literally swarmed with them, and one could not peep over a bush without seeing scores at play on the other side. But, in truth, although, from the sandy nature of the soil, this tract was particularly favourable to their habits and increase, Spain, on the whole, is much

overrun by rabbits; and it is a fact not unworthy of note, that they appear to have been as abundant in ancient as in modern times. I have seen a Roman medal upon which conquered and suppliant Spain is represented as suing for peace; the figure, clad in feminine attire, holds in one hand an olive branch, and at her feet crouches the genius of the country in the shape of a rabbit. This fact appears also to have been well known, for Catullus alludes to it when he styles the Spaniards

cuniculosæ  
Celtiberiæ fili.

At this kind of shooting we were no matches for the guardas or keepers who accompanied us; at least C——, who considered himself something of a shot, was, in spite of his double-barreled detonator, fairly distanced by the rude flint single-barrels of our lynx-eyed companions. Their mode of charging their pieces was equally rude, and was a ludicrous contrast to the trim apparatus of modern sportsmen. The proper quantity of powder was poured from an ancient horn into the hollow of the hand, and from thence into the gun; a few leaves torn from the nearest shrub formed the wadding; and the shot was measured out in the same way as the powder. They brought with them a brace of podencos, a species of dog much in vogue among Andalusian sportsmen, though to our eyes they seemed little better than curs, and on experience we found their appearance far from being redeemed by superior qualifications. There was also in the field one of the far-famed race of Spanish pointers, with the division between the nostrils distinguishing this caste; its powers of scent were un-

questionably great, but were neutralised by the slowness of the pace by which it travelled over the ground : indeed, its evolutions were so much on a par with those of a tortoise, as were also those of others of the same breed I saw, that I should be loth to recommend their services to any British sportsman who is not possessed of more than an ordinary stock of patience.

Bearing game-bags heavily laden with red-legged partridges and rabbits, we returned home as evening came on, and found awaiting us an excellent supper, prepared by the wife of the senior guarda. At an early hour we retired to rest, in order to be in full vigour on the morrow for the nobler game, for the sake of which we had principally sought this remote spot. As to our prospects of success, I had been led by the experience of the day to regard them as anything but cheering. Traces of deer, it was true, were to be seen in abundance, and many were so fresh as to denote that a few hours only had elapsed since they had been imprinted on the soil ; yet I was far from hailing these as favourable omens. For one reason, the country appeared destitute of cover ; or, where this occurred, it was of a nature to embarrass rather than facilitate our movements. Here were no pine-woods to furnish a shady ambush, but sandy knolls, whose naked summits betrayed to a great distance the presence of objects upon them : on the other hand, the hollows between were clothed with a growth of brushwood so tall as generally to reach above our heads, and not unfrequently so dense and matted as to defy our utmost efforts to force a way through it. Hence, as it seemed to me, we could not stir without exposing ourselves so completely as to ruin every hope of approaching with-

in gunshot of an animal so timid and wary as the deer. Our guardas, however, were of a different opinion, and even went so far as to maintain that our yesterday's quarters, as regarded the abundance of deer and the probabilities of encountering them, were not to be mentioned in the same breath with the Palacio. Notwithstanding this confident assertion, I remained as sceptical as before: local prejudices in Spain are so strong, that it is very rare to find the inhabitant of a pueblo, or district, who does not ascribe to it every gift of nature and every virtue under the sun; and in proportion as he bepraises his own "pais," so does he depreciate the towns and provinces of his neighbours.

Next morning we were moving along briskly, following the steps of the aforesaid guardas, who certainly displayed considerable judgment in their plan of operations. At the distance of a mile from the Palacio, we halted upon the brow of a sandy mound, which, with several others, encompassed a hollow space of several hundred yards in length. I cannot describe this depression better than by styling it an oblong trough carpeted with luxuriant brushwood. Looking down upon it, the whole seemed so dense and compact, as almost to induce the belief that it would be a much less difficult matter to walk along the top than force a passage through a mass so solid. This, however, our guardas proceeded to do: after stationing C—— and myself about a hundred yards apart, upon one of the long sides of the hollow, they commenced from the opposite one to cross towards us.

My position was on the rounded summit of one of these sandy hillocks; but as there rose thereon not even a tuft of grass, far less a bush behind which I might screen myself, I retired down the exterior slope,



as the only mode of effecting that purpose. Here, stretching myself on the sand, I listened to the shoutings and whoopings of the beaters, trusting to their lungs for sufficient warning, should any game hold towards my side. I had not lain long in my retreat before the confusion of tongues on a sudden rose louder and more vehement. Amid the cries, I distinguished the voice of the oldest guarda, shouting to me to take a good aim. Why this advice should be directed to me I could not at first divine, as my ears informed me that all on my side was quiet; and my powers of vision I was loth to exercise from the naked summit of the hillock, lest I should become the observed of all-observing deer. I was beginning, therefore, to conclude that the shout of the guarda was addressed to my friend, when I heard in front of me the sound of twigs snapping and branches being brushed aside. In a moment I stood on the top of the mound, just in time to behold before me a fine stag clearing a bush in beautiful style. A few more bounds would have brought him up to where I stood. The instant I appeared, he paused, his head and neck alone rising above the brushwood. As he was then not more than thirty yards off, I hurriedly discharged the right barrel, which, for want of better ammunition, I had loaded with a few pistol-bullets. These, I believe, had no other effect than to rouse him from his fit of surprise at my unexpected appearance; then, wheeling sharply round to his left, he had gained about thirty yards more ere I sent a bullet from the remaining barrel upon his steps. Still he continued in full flight, his progress being a succession of bounds, characterised by such ease, freedom, and grace, that I could not help watching his retreat with an admiration that banished



every shade of disappointment I might feel at my unlucky shooting. At the further end of the hollow he dashed into a sheet of water that bounded it, and then, mounting a slight eminence beyond, disappeared down the reverse slope. Slowly I sought my ambush, from which I was again summoned by the significant cry, "Apunt'usted bien" (Aim well). Another stag was roused, but on this occasion kept so far in the centre of the hollow as to be beyond the range of those who were posted at the sides, and only offered to one of the guardas the chance of a long shot. He, too, followed the direction taken by the first; and no more appearing, we proceeded upon their tracks.

"Señor," said the old guarda when I overtook him, "you have hit that animal; I heard the ball strike it."

This assertion, however gratifying, was at the same time so extraordinary, that I could scarcely yield it credence. At that time I was unaware that the "smack" of the ball, as it is termed, upon the hide of a deer is quite perceptible to the ears of the practised, and can be readily distinguished from the report of the gun by which it is accompanied. Without, however, disputing his opinion, I followed him over the eminence I have mentioned, at the foot of which another shallow lagoon was spread out. To the further side of this we hastened, while C—— and the younger guarda kept upon the deer's track, which, as it lay among the brushwood, and was with difficulty to be detected, led them more slowly down the slope. Our object in seeking the opposite margin of the lagoon, was to ascertain if the first deer had crossed it; and for this purpose we coasted along the side of the water, the old man narrowly examining every print of a hoof

as we proceeded. He turned at length—his eyes sparkling with excitement—and said, “Don Roberto, he has not passed this way; we shall find him there,” pointing to the slope, along the face of which C—— and the others were scattered in close search. Sure enough, a shout from one of the party confirmed his prediction, and brought us in haste to the spot where he stood. We found the stag at the foot of a large bush, quietly doubled up, to use an expressive phrase, and life apparently extinct for some time: not a trace of blood stained its coat, except a solitary speck that marked where the ball had entered. Though young, it was a large animal, and formed a goodly load for the macho, which was despatched to the Palacio with its freight. In the meantime we proceeded in quest of the second stag, which the younger guarda maintained he had wounded.

To us, as we followed the men, it was a matter of astonishment to hear them, on passing various hoof-prints, name the precise time that had elapsed since each impression was stamped on the soil; and this with as much confidence as if they had been witnesses of the fact. To our eyes there appeared no perceptible difference between the track that was ten and that which was two hours old; yet, with the skill acquired by long experience, the guardas perceived some distinction by which they were guided in the pursuit. Besides this, the track was frequently lost, as we supposed, at spots where twenty deer or more had crossed and recrossed in such a way as to cover the ground with a perplexed maze of foot-prints. Nevertheless our guardas, staunch as the sleuth hounds of old, held unerringly for their quarry, and after proceeding a couple of miles, discovered by signs known

to themselves that we were drawing nigh the place where the stag we tracked had found a covert. We now advanced with caution towards the locality they indicated, but had the mortification to see all our endeavours come to nought: the startled animal, long before we came within shot, broke from its cover, and bounded away at such a pace as to leave us no alternative but to give up the pursuit. The day was now so far advanced that a fresh expedition could not be undertaken with hopes of a successful issue, and we therefore unwillingly directed our steps to the Palacio, our reluctance being increased by the recollection that this was the last day of our sport, for the leave we enjoyed was limited.

Such is the style of deer-shooting in the Coto: although it differs materially from the science of stalking as practised in the Highlands of Scotland, and wants the high zest which must ever attend that exciting pursuit, it is not devoid of attractions peculiar to itself. It must be remembered that the nature of the country is adverse to stalking, which is impracticable on a flat or undulating surface clothed with woods; in place, therefore, of the lonely chase of the Highland sportsman, who tracks his game in the same noiseless fashion by which the Red Indian steals upon his foe, there is necessarily adopted here the system of driving the deer, the characteristics of which are numbers and noise. Even this mode has its exciting qualities, and I am persuaded that many would prefer it to the other, from being the more stirring of the two. There is something indescribably animating in the tumult and cries that then wake up the woods; at every shout that rings through their depths, the sportsman grasps his gun closer, and more intently eyes the woody mass in

his front ; his ear becomes preternaturally strained, so that the falling of a leaf disturbs it ; now a distant shot excites his hopes—now another close by breaks the profound stillness around him ; and then comes the headlong rush of the deer past him—his rapid aim, his moment of expectation, and its fruits of chagrin or triumph. In all this there is a charm, which, though of a different kind from the prolonged excitement of a Highland chase, wherein every energy is tested, and hope and fear more keenly aroused, is all-absorbing at the time, and never fails to leave the liveliest impression on the mind.

The following day our macho, after a march of fifteen miles, might be seen stumbling along the ill-paved streets of San Lucar under the weight of its antlered burden. The extent of the Coto may be gathered from the circumstance that our march traversed only the half of the limits it embraces ; in round numbers its dimensions are thirty miles long by twelve at the broadest point ; on three sides it is enveloped by water, the Guadalquiver rolling past two, while the Atlantic lines the third with foam.

There was one consequence connected with the successful result of our sport, which was not only unexpected, but formed a most agreeable termination to our adventures. As a matter of course, our friends in San Lucar received a goodly share of the venison ; in sending which, we considered we were merely acknowledging no inconsiderable amount of kindness, for which we were then as ever their debtors. The sequel, however, showed that Spanish pride does not rest easy till it has returned an equivalent, or more than an equivalent, for presents of this nature ; from that time we never ceased to receive supplies of wine from our

friends. As they were all wine-growers, such gifts were perfectly legitimate, but as often as they reached us did the senders lament that better wine they had not to offer. The *manzanilla*, however, was undeniably excellent; and as C—— and I pledged each other in fragrant bumpers, we both agreed that for once I had made a “lucky hit.”

## CHAPTER IV.

WINTER IN SAN LUCAR. — SANGRE AZUL. — TERTULIA. — GLOOMY  
AIR OF SPANISH DWELLINGS. — PELAR LA PAVA. — INTERMENT  
OF A COUNTRYMAN. — VISITING. — XERES. — ITS EXTENSIVE WINE  
ESTABLISHMENTS. — THE UPSET.

GENERALLY speaking, the winter descends upon Spain with no common severity. Upon the sunny province of Andalucia alone does its touch fall lightly, but even here there is weather which would be considered inclement; from time to time deluges of rain occur which shut out the sun for days, and so long as they last confine the inhabitants to their homes: these watery skies are, however, no unwelcome substitutes for the piercing winds of the Castilian steppes or the snows of Aragon and Galicia. Although the season was pretty far advanced, it became, therefore, necessary to choose some town where, while waiting the return of spring, I might pass an interval of inaction in the least irksome manner possible. Cadiz I rejected, much to the astonishment of its Alameda-pacing, café-lounging inhabitants, who hold these enjoyments to be the summit of happiness; but life in that city to my feelings so closely resembled the monotonous existence of the captive in his cell, that, after a few days' trial, I never failed to find it unsupportably tedious. On every side but one the sea washes up to its walls; and where it does not, the gate opens upon a long causeway traversing a flat, partly of



sand and partly of salt-water marshes. This constitutes the sole promenade beyond the walls, and the reader may easily imagine I had no desire to share its delights with the Gaditanians. Seville then occurred to me, and from experience I could tell that of all cities in the south of Spain, it possessed the greatest attractions for a stranger. There are paintings for the connoisseur; many a relic of Moorish and Roman art for the antiquary; theatres and an opera for those who love such. Without the walls are those charming walks by the broad Guadalquivir, which, at every sunset, beholds the bright-eyed Sevillanas moving along its banks slow and stately, but not so silent as its own tide. Within the walls is to be found the best society in Andalusia, whatever Cadiz may urge to the contrary; for here are the residences of the principal nobility of the province. Besides this, by means of the steamers on the river, the stranger is brought into that close communication with the world at home which makes him feel that, although in a strange land, he is not removed from friends.

Sundry considerations, however, induced me to prolong my stay in San Lucar, which thus became my head-quarters for some months. During that period I enjoyed abundant opportunities of meeting and becoming acquainted with the principal families of the town, with many of whom my acquaintance ripened into intimacy. The society of San Lucar, from the difference of its materials, was of a far higher order than that which is generally found in English provincial towns of the same extent and population. Here were the abodes of those *hidalgos* and country gentlemen whose estates lay in the vicinity, and who, in place of residing upon their properties, transferred their mansions to this the nearest town of note. Such is the custom among

the landed proprietors in the province ; and its prevalence is to be traced, partly to the general insecurity of life and property in a country so indifferently governed as Spain, and partly to the natural disposition of the people to congregate into communities. The same motives influence those classes whose callings connect them with agriculture and a rural life ; and one and all, the lowest husbandman not excepted, resort to towns or villages for protection and society. Upon the latter class, such a necessity—for a necessity it is—may be supposed to press with peculiar severity, as they frequently travel four or eight miles before reaching the soil they have to till ; but the Andalusian jornalero finds a remedy for this hardship. While his master sallies forth, mounted on a prancing steed, he bestrides a “burrico,” and proceeds in the dawn of the morning to the scene of his labours ; from whence, at the close of the day, he returns upon the back of that despised animal. To him it is, therefore, as valuable as the pig is to the Irish cottager, and as often becomes an inmate of his cabin and the pet of the “niños.”

At the house of Don J—— P——, a turtulia was held every evening, at which the greater part of the sangre azul in San Lucar never failed to assemble. They of the sangre azul, or “blue blood,” are the aristocracy of the place, and by virtue of the ancient tide that flows in their veins, assume a tone and superiority that are, of course, highly distasteful to those whose blood is not so blue as that of the “Cristianos viejos y rancios.” Accordingly, society is divided into a higher and lower circle, the “alta categoria” and the “baja categoria ;” the former are the exclusives of the place, few in numbers, but of noble descent, and, though displaying less hauteur than most men in their position,

the cause of dire heartburnings and jealousies among the "baxa categoria," which embraces every shade of the vulgar rich. The two circles seldom come into contact, except at entertainments given by the former: such festive meetings, however, are rare, and, even were they more frequent, would have little effect in narrowing the distance by which the divisions are separated; the tertulia still exists to interpose an effectual barrier against intimacy.

Few, I imagine, need be informed that a tertulia is a conversazione of a kind peculiar to Spain: in the metropolis and the larger towns it embraces a numerous assemblage of acquaintances as well as friends; but in the smaller provincial towns it is open only to the latter and the members and relatives of the family at whose house it takes place. It is not every family that holds a tertulia; in San Lucar there were only two who received their friends in this manner; neither is it given every evening, although this is frequently done, but generally on stated nights of the week—sometimes only once in that period of time. On these occasions it is expected that he who has the entrée should present himself, if only for a few minutes. To absent himself without cause would give umbrage to the family, as it would imply that their society had lost its attractions; but by a visit, however short, he is understood to express his sense of its agreeability, and at the same time need plead no excuse for its brevity, that being always ascribed to other engagements for the evening.

These remarks being premised, let me ask the reader to picture to himself a spacious saloon, whose lofty roof of dark wood is dimly seen by the light of a couple of lamps. The walls are simply whitewashed—

this being done for the sake of coolness in summer, and display neither ornament nor painting, except one at the upper end of the room—a crucifixion by Zurbaran, that master of dark colouring crossed by broad gleams of light. For reasons which will be appreciated in a warm climate, the furniture is of the simplest description, and, judged by our standards of comfort, scanty and incomplete: a cabinet, an antique table or two, with a host of modern chairs, of the lightest materials, standing up against the walls, scarcely, if at all, encroach upon the dimensions of the apartment, the aspect of which, at a first glance, is somewhat cold and cheerless. The floor, of brick, at this season is hidden by matting, and in the centre is placed a brasier of glowing charcoal; round this runs a ledge of wood, upon which, after having drawn in our chairs, we place our feet, and literally sit round the fire. As each tertuliano enters, he bows to the lady of the house, addressing her and her female friends with the salutation of “A los pies de usted” (At your feet). The shaking of hands is unknown in Spain, and even among friends is never seen, except on extraordinary occasions, such as the meeting after a long separation, or on the departure for a distant journey. On quitting the room, the visitor says with a loud voice, “Señores y señoras, que lo pasen bien” (Gentlemen and ladies, farewell); or perhaps, “may you remain with God;” to which they respond, “Vaya usted con Dios” (May you go with God).

While thus seated, conversation seldom flags, for the colloquial powers of Andalusians are very great; and as raconteurs, there are few who can approach them: should, however, their vivacity be exhausted, the resources of music and cards are at hand to beguile

the hours. Let it not, however, be supposed that the guitar then comes into play ; that national instrument is voted vulgar by the higher ranks, and but seldom, and then only in the hands of a gentleman, are its strains awakened in the salas ; by a lady it is never touched. Occasionally, it happens, that while thus whiling away the time, a bell is heard tinkling in the street, and from the increasing loudness of the sound appears to be approaching nearer. One of the party moves to the window, from whence he descries the flashing light below, and intimates the fact to the listening circle. "Su magestad, su magestad !" they exclaim, and one and all sink upon their knees. It is the Host, borne to some dying sinner to comfort his last moments, and smooth his passage to eternity. So long as the bell is heard, the whole party remain in this posture of reverence, while not a sound is audible in the room, except a murmur from the lips of those who are muttering a prayer for the weal of the dying ; but when the last tinkle ceases, they rise to their feet, and resume the occupations at which they had been engaged. The speaker finishes the sentence in the midst of which he was interrupted—the song is taken up at the verse at which it stopped—the cards are dealt round without a moment's loss of time ; no one bestows a thought upon the fate of his dying fellow-creature, or regards the ceremony through which he has passed in a more serious light than an observance imposed by custom, and which it would be singular to omit. On highdays and holidays, the amusements are of a more mirthful character than usual, and resemble the festivities of merry Christmas ;—forfeits, round games, and a variety of other diversions are introduced, in which the old join the young, and the party seldom



separates till a late hour. On other occasions, at ten o'clock a general move takes place ; cloaks and shawls are in requisition, and the company depart homewards to partake of supper, which is generally placed on the table at that hour. As the dinner usually takes place at an early hour of the day, the evening meal becomes an important one in Spanish life, and few linger long in the sala after the clock has announced that its hour has arrived.

In San Lucar, as in the other towns of the province, there are no areas interposing between the house and the narrow border of pavement which is supplied for the convenience of the foot-passenger; the latter consequently commands a full view through the windows on his level into the interior of the apartments on the ground-floor. These, however, in mansions of pretension, are generally converted into stables, and as a matter of necessary precaution, the windows are strongly grated. Not only is this the case with regard to the lower story, but the upper rooms are similarly defended; and on penetrating into the inner court or patio, with which each house is provided, the stranger marks with surprise that even here every casement is fenced with bars and gratings. Notwithstanding, therefore, the dazzling colours and gaudy embellishments which frequently ornament the exterior walls, there appears to hang a gloomy air of distrust around every mansion; its aspect realises to the letter the Spanish proverb that is applied to those who, for protection's sake, encumber themselves with many arms—*Cargado de hierro, cargado de miedo* (loaded with iron, loaded with fear); and, undoubtedly, fear is or was the origin of its fortress-like appearance. That these apprehensions are on the whole groundless, will, I think, be acknowledged by



every traveller who has resided for any length of time in Andalusian cities; nevertheless, the citizen continues to cling to the habits of his fathers, and cannot bring himself to adopt fashions more in unison with altered times; he still preserves these and many other remains of ancient jealousy and distrust. Thus, for instance, in seeking admittance into his dwelling, there are certain formalities to be observed, that recall the days when watchwords were given, and drawbridge and portcullis lowered. The peasant, as he stands at the gate, cries aloud, "Ave Maria purissima;" to this the response from within is, "Sin peccado concebida" (conceived without sin), or in some parts of the province, "Bendita y alabada sea para siempre" (for ever blessed and praised). More frequently the latter religious rejoinder is neglected, and the speaker from within simply inquires, "Quien es?" (who is it?) To this the invariable reply is, "Gente de paz" (people of peace). Having by this scrutiny proved himself to be not only a good Catholic, but a man of pacific intentions, he is allowed to enter; the door turns upon its hinges, and he walks forward into the court.

But to return to the grated windows of these dwellings. Should you have occasion after nightfall to traverse the dimly lighted streets, you will not go far without brushing past a figure muffled in an ample cloak, and with the sombrero slouched over the eyes, leaning against the iron bars. As you pass, your ears inform you that it is conversing in a low voice with some one within, whom the darkness shrouds from observation. In all probability you will take no further note of the whispering pair; but if you be more curious than wise, and bestow on them more than a passing look, another becloaked figure will probably

step out from some corner, and politely request you to refrain from interfering with other people's business. If this hint be not sufficient, he will prepare to enforce it by other means, and, by displaying his *navaja*, threaten to appeal to arms. He is engaged in one of the most sacred duties of Spanish friendship. To guard from danger or discovery—or, as it is termed, "*guardar les espaldas*," "to guard the back" of a friend who may be playing the lover—is an office to be undertaken only by a tried comrade, whose devotion and courage may be proof against the rude trials to which such a position subjects him. If the fair one be noted for her attractions, then there are rivals to be encountered, whose jealous passions, if aroused by witnessing another thus engaged, nothing would so soon appease as a thrust of the knife, given, as may be supposed, without much regard to the rules of fair play. Under these circumstances, the second is summoned by his principal to stand, like the knight of old, ready to do battle against all comers, should they approach with hostile intentions. I need not add, that these nocturnal meetings are a frequent occasion of brawls, and that lives are sometimes lost, and usually dangerous wounds given and received, when the knife is brought into play.

This custom, though more prevalent among the lower classes, is not entirely banished from the upper ranks of society. In truth, the mystery and romance attending it have too many charms for Spanish lovers of every degree ever to permit it to become the exclusive usage of any one rank in life. It is far more congenial to his temperament to throw a veil of secrecy over his attachment, which not unfrequently from the first wears a certain air of romance. On the Alameda he encounters some dark-eyed beauty, whose glance fires all the

susceptible nature of his Southern bosom. To follow her footsteps when the gay throng disperses—to linger in the narrow street where her home is—and, by one of those mute but expressive signs known in southern climes, to testify his passion to her as she sits at the balcony that commands a full view of the moving world in the street—or to convey a message by some Mercury familiar with such errands—are the usual steps that precede an interview. This, however, let it not be imagined is to be sought amid the shady alleys of the Alameda. No; the fair ones of Spain are too jealously guarded by mammas and duennas ever to know much of the pleasures of solitude, far less to enjoy them with a companion. But when gates are barred, and the household wrapped in sleep, it is then that the Spanish maid rises to keep her tryst with her lover. As she steals along the corridors, and descends to the basement story, before a grated window in which he keeps his impatient watch, perhaps she smiles at the fruitlessness of parental precautions, and repeats to herself

Madre, mi madre  
Guardas me poneis,  
Pero si no me guardé  
No me guardareis.

Of course, it is rare to find meetings of this nature sanctioned by parents, though there are, occasionally, exceptions. I was acquainted with a family, proud of its ancient Castilian blood, one of the ladies of which had become attached to a gentleman, whose pedigree and profession made him no match in the eyes of her parents for the daughter of a hidalgo and old Christian to boot. As usual, the young folks met in the manner I have described. Time wore on, and whether it was

that the merit and character of the lover, or his rising fortunes and reputation, atoned for the fault of being unprovided with sixteen quarterings, I know not, but the hearts of the old people began at length to soften towards him. The first signs of their relenting were shown in a singular way. As he stood at the window before which he was in the habit of posting himself, one of the domestics appeared with a chair, and, with his master's compliments, requested him to be seated thereon. From that day, or rather night, as regularly as he presented himself at the same place, a servant advanced with a chair, which was tendered to him with the usual compliments from the hidalgo. This continued for some months, till at last it was formally notified that he was at liberty to transfer his courtship from the exterior to the interior of the mansion; this was tantamount to his being accepted as the "novio" or betrothed of the young lady. Henceforward the course of true love could not fail to run smooth, as the sala was open to it, and the novio was welcome there; but notwithstanding this, the stolen interviews of yore had attractions for the couple which they preferred to the meetings in the drawing-room. Frequently, on having occasion at night to pass by the house, did I see a figure I well knew, though wrapped in a cloak and embozado, standing by a certain window, and holding converse there with the novia.

One morning an English friend called upon me to communicate tidings of a painful nature. He informed me that a fellow-countryman had arrived the day before from Cadiz, and, being in the last stage of consumption, had been denied admittance into the various lodging-houses in the town. In consequence, the only shelter he could obtain was in the public hospital. At an early

hour of the morning, death had overtaken the sufferer in his wretched asylum.

As the conduct of those who thus shut their doors against a dying man may appear unwarrantably cruel, and may lead some of my readers to tax the Andalucians with inhumanity, it is but fair to say, that with regard to this malady they entertain certain deep-rooted prejudices. I never met an Andalucian who did not maintain that consumption was highly infectious, and that he would remain no longer than he could help in a dwelling where a case had terminated fatally. They imagine that the walls imbibe the infection so largely that ordinary modes of purification fail to eradicate it ; and to such an extreme is this prejudice carried, that tenants and proprietors are in the custom of demanding from the consumptive inmates of their dwellings a sum sufficient to defray the expense of plastering anew the apartments they occupied ; this is considered the only mode of effectually banishing the remains of the malady, and of rendering the rooms habitable for the future.

It was necessary to make arrangements for rendering the last offices to one of our country and creed, and for this purpose, in company with my friend and the consul, I proceeded to the hospital. What had been once a convent was now converted into that establishment, and in one of the narrow cells lay the corpse of the deceased. Our motives for this act had been simply those of duty towards the departed, unknown to us except as a fellow-countryman ; but when an attendant lifted up a rug that covered his remains, it struck me that, living or dead, the possessor of that wasted frame could be regarded with no indifferent eye. Tall he must have been, for the stiffened limbs projected beyond the foot of the bed—unnaturally outstretched as it seemed by



the hand of death ; the features of his countenance were regular and even delicate, and were united to a lofty forehead from which dissolution could not efface its thoughtful expression. Poor fellow ! he died, as the attendants told us, speaking in his own tongue, and endeavouring in vain to communicate with them in a language they did not understand. Probably his mind was wandering, as frequently happens to the victims of this malady in its closing stage ; but if it were not, how painful is it to think that his dying moments were embittered by the hopelessness of conveying to distant friends the last wishes and last words of affection !

“Oh ! schwer ist's in der fremde sterben unbeweint.” So says Schiller ; and those who have sojourned alone among strangers, and been laid on a bed of sickness from which they expected never to rise, know this feeling full well ; however kindly they may be tended, there is yet a sense of isolation which falls with dreary effect upon the thoughts ; and to aggravate all, how much is there one would wish to say, but is prevented from expressing by the certainty that word or message will never reach those to whom it is addressed ! Happy they who die in their own land, with kindred and friends around them, and familiar hands to smooth their pillow.

It is a scandal to Spain, and a reproach to Britain, that the bones of our countrymen are denied a nook in the public cemeteries here ; nay, more, the privilege of a separate place of interment is conceded only as a special favour, and then only after many representations and protracted diplomacy. Two or three of the large towns are, however, provided with resting-places for Protestant clay : Malaga was the first to obtain this boon ; and I believe Cadiz is now added to the num-



ber. Where, then, do our countrymen rest who die at a distance from these places? They are buried like dogs: either in ditches, gardens, fields, or in the sands by the seashore. The clay of a heretic is that of an outcast; any place is, therefore, good enough for it; and, above all, let it be removed to a distance from Catholic dust, which would shrink with holy horror from the contamination of its approach. Such are the language and the sentiments of bigotry; and suiting its notions to the rancorous spirit they breathe, it deals in the manner I have described with the corpses of our Protestant countrymen.

Our reflections upon this point took a practical turn as we deliberated concerning the interment of the deceased. To bury him in the sands by the river-side revolted our feelings, even if we had not known that his relatives were on the way to join him, and would naturally wish to visit the spot where he was laid, and perhaps mark it by some memorial of attachment. After much consultation, we could devise no better plan than to obtain admission into the cemetery, using for that purpose the engine which in this country removes mountains of scruples and banishes every difficulty: a golden key we thought would open the gates; and Mr. C——, as the most experienced among us in these matters, undertook to conduct the negotiation. So sure was he of a successful result, that, deeming further communication unnecessary, we engaged to meet the following morning before daybreak at the cemetery. Punctually at the hour appointed we were in waiting for him; the night had been stormy, and from time to time fierce blasts of wind and rain drove us to take shelter behind the walls of the enclosure. In a short time Mr. C—— joined us, attended by Salmon, one of the escort em-

ployed to protect travellers on the road between San Lucar and Port St. Mary's; he was, moreover, high in the confidence of Mr. C——, who frequently entrusted him with commissions of importance. His offices had on this occasion been put in requisition to induce the sexton by the promise of a bribe to leave the gate unlocked, for the opening of this was our chief difficulty, and could only be effected by his means. It appeared, however, that either gold had lost its usual charms for the latter, or his scruples had returned during the night with overpowering force; on trying the bolts, not one was found absent from its duty. Salmon, however, consoled us with the assurance that the man was certain to keep his word, and would probably come in person with the keys.—Meanwhile, as a cemetery, like many other things in this strange country, differs very much from those of our own or other lands, it will not be amiss to describe it here. Seen from the outside, its shape is usually that of a square enclosed by lofty walls, but in the quadrangular space within you behold no mounds, no gravestones to mark the lonely dwellings of the dead. These are ranged above-ground, along the inner side of the enclosing wall; each coffin being placed in a narrow cell, tiers of which rise above each other to the height of twelve or fifteen feet. In truth, when you look at the volumes on the shelves of a library, supposing them to be laid horizontally instead of being upright, you have some notion of the mode of interment in a Spanish place of burial; each tenement for mortality occupies the place of a volume, and, like it, displays its name and titles on a conspicuous place.

We waited in silent expectation till the sun rose unpleasantly high for our purpose, for which the presence

of many observers was far from desirable; people at the same time began to be moving about; and lastly, to complete our mortification, a priest approached the gate. Our presence there attracted his notice, and after regarding us with an eye of wonder and suspicion, he admitted himself by a private key, and proceeded to his daily routine of performing early mass in a small chapel within the precincts. To have remained longer after this would have been a waste of time, and so we retraced our steps homewards; Salmon, as we went, relieving his feelings by the application to the faithless conspirator of such choice epithets as "picaro," "tunante," and so forth. Before we parted, another consultation was held, at which it was decided that, having failed in this attempt, and there being little likelihood of our succeeding in a fresh one, permission should be solicited to bury our departed countryman in the garden of the hospital. The leave we sought was granted, and in the afternoon we met beside a shallow grave that had been hastily dug in a corner. The coffin was brought forth—a simple box of deal, provided with lock and key. One of the attendants lifted up the lid, to show that no deception was practised; and the beautiful service for the Burial of the Dead being read by Mr. C——, earth was returned to earth, and our task was done.

Of my winter's sojourn in San Lucar I have little to record, except that life there is very like what it usually is in country towns; generally speaking, monotony was a chief feature. Every day when the weather was fine—which was not always the case, for deluges of rain pour down for two or three days at a time—I took my accustomed walk on the playa or beach of sand along the Guadalquivir, to inhale the fresh and health-giving



breezes from the Atlantic; or, perhaps, strolled into the country among the surrounding vineyards. At this season of the year the generous clusters are no longer seen embowered amid luxuriant foliage, but a few gnarled twigs and stumps are all that remain of the vine; and fields of such bear no very distant resemblance to plantations of ill-conditioned gooseberry-bushes. Occasionally a morning visit to some family whiled away an hour; but the forenoon is not the time to see a Spanish dame to advantage. Her toilette appears to be deferred to the hour of the evening paseo; nay, it has struck me,—but this I speak with “bated breath,”—that ablutions are postponed till long past midday; at all events, when sitting with an old shawl wrapped round her, and otherwise carelessly attired, she is not the same creature who on the Alameda, her symmetrical shape set off to advantage by the costume of her country, walks and moves the personification of unstudied grace and natural vivacity. In this land, so far behind the age, dinner takes place at the unfashionable hour of two: it is followed by an hour or so devoted to the siesta; that over, the sleepers arise, and the male portion of them shake off their lethargy at the café over coffee and political argumentation; then comes the Alameda, where, from the time that the cavaliers join the señoritas, nothing is heard but the hum of voices mingled with the rattling of fans and the sound of moving feet. This animated scene has also its allotted span; in due course tyrant Custom steps in among the throng and bids it disperse; politics and flirtations are then adjourned to the following evening; and in the mean time, those to whom a tertulia is open, repair thither. Here the flow of small talk begins afresh, and never ceases to pour from the lips of the

assembly till the hour of departure arrives. Each one then wends his way homewards to supper; and thus an afternoon passes in San Lucar much in the same way as it is spent throughout the other towns of the province.

Once or twice during my residence I was required by the laws of Spanish etiquette to pay visits of a more ceremonious nature than usual. It is the custom for the friends of a gentleman to pay their respects to him with some show of formality upon the day of his patron saint. It is hardly necessary to say that his patron is the saint whose name he bears; and supposing him therefore to be called José, the visits are made upon the day devoted by the Romish Church to the especial honour of that saint. His house is then thrown open as if for a levée. On reaching the sala, his wife and family, arrayed in their best, are found sitting in state to receive the company; the master will probably be absent, being engaged in the same office towards others of his name which his visitors are performing towards himself. After a short visit, each one retires, but not before expressing his best wishes for the welfare of the house. Those whose rank does not entitle them to the entrée of the sala, are not however debarred from testifying their regard, but it is done in a different fashion; upon a table in the hall there is placed a book in which they inscribe their names, which is deemed all-sufficient for the purpose. This usage is one of ancient date in Spain, and was probably prevalent, if it is not so now, throughout the rest of Catholic Europe. It is mentioned by Lady Mary Wortley Montague as having been one of the customs of society in Vienna during her residence there; and her description closely corresponds with that which I have given.

Being tempted by some fine weather, I was induced to break through the routine of existence in San Lucar by making an excursion to Xeres. The direct road being then impassable, I was compelled to make a detour and take the route by Port St. Mary's. As far as that town, nothing could be better than the condition of the road, along which gangs of convicts were stationed at various distances to keep it in repair; but upon quitting the Port, a widely different scene presented itself. The road, which had manifestly been formed with great labour, was now in a state of total disrepair, and on looking forward displayed only a succession of muddy pools of water: round these our calesa coasted, varying this style of progress by diverging occasionally into the fields on either side, or boldly traversing some of the Stygian ponds, the water in which usually reached to the axles of our vehicle. So slow and tedious, therefore, was our advance, that two hours were consumed ere we discerned the white buildings of Xeres, which is little more than two leagues from Port St. Mary's.

Of this far-famed fount of generous wine it is out of my province to speak; lying in the beaten track of tourists, it is too well known to require a lengthened description from my pen. It is a city of fifty or sixty thousand inhabitants, situated upon an eminence, and would claim no more than a passing glance from the traveller, were it not for the universal renown it has acquired in connexion with the juice of the grape. Notwithstanding the elevated position of Xeres, and the wealth of its inhabitants, there is no town in Andalucia so ill-paved, filthy, and altogether so offensive to the nostrils. The reception we experienced on entering it would have daunted any but a traveller inured to Spanish towns; for the termination to the execrable road-I



have just described was a wide space covered with dead horses and donkeys, upon the carcasses of which hordes of savage dogs were preying. Amid these our calesa wound its way and conveyed us to the inn, which is situated in a large square; here, too, everything as regards cleanliness was in keeping with the character of the town, and a more repulsive place I never entered.

One thing, however, must be affirmed of Xeres, and that is, that its great wine-proprietors are living examples of the truth of the remark, that wine opens the heart of man. Their hospitality is on a scale proportioned to the vastness of their establishments, which are truly princely; nothing, indeed, but the largest amount of capital could construct and fill those magazines of wine, wherein are deposited the accumulated vintages of years. By far the most extensive are those of Mr. Peter Domecq, which are said to cover a space of three acres of ground. In wonder I followed the proprietor as he conducted me from one storehouse to another, each edifice as large as a church: there was not one that did not seem to suffer from a plethora of huge casks, in any one of which might be absorbed the vintage of a dozen vineyards. The giants were piled one above another in long ranks, divided by narrow passages, that resembled the deep lanes of the country. The uppermost tier, of which there were usually three, contained the produce of the latest vintages; in the intermediate was an older wine; and in the foundation story the most ancient of all. Whatever quantity was drawn off from this latter tier, was replaced by an equal portion from the casks above, so that no precise age could be assigned to any one cask, the contents of which were in fact a mixture of various ages and

growths. Hence it is impossible for the wine-proprietors here to comply to the letter with an order specifying an article of a certain age. If, for instance, a ten-year-old butt be required, it will be prepared according to a certain formula, into which there enters something of an algebraical calculation; there will be a small portion of wine a hundred years old, something more of an article perhaps twenty, and the remainder will consist of a vintage only four or five years in the storehouse: thus will be manufactured a wine, no doubt excellent, but very far from squaring with the notions of those who might conceive it to be the genuine juice of the grape expressed ten years ago. After having led us through many storehouses, and displayed to our admiring eyes some thousands of butts, Mr. Domecq at last paused before one that looked the very chieftain of the race, being in size like three single tuns rolled into one: here was imprisoned the celebrated "madre de vino," or mother of wine, a butt of which he valued at a thousand pounds; and was never to be procured out of Spain. The "madre" was at once the oldest and finest wine in his stores, and was applied to the sole use of flavouring the contents of other casks by a small addition of its precious virtues. Nor was its proprietor satisfied with merely explaining these things; he filled me a bumper of the costly juice, for which I thanked him at the time; and as pleasant recollections of the same still linger in my memory, I repeat my thanks again. More than one glass would have been a rash experiment, for an extreme age had not only given it an exquisite aroma and a consistency nearly approaching to that of a liqueur, but had increased its potency to a degree which was the more dangerous from being imperceptible to the taste.

The direct road between San Lucar and Xeres, and especially the circuitous route by which we travelled, enjoy the reputation ascribed to Hounslow Heath a century ago. During the winter, rumour had been busy with reports of various robberies committed on these roads by parties of "salteadores," who seemed to vanish as suddenly as they appeared; but to such tales C—— and I paid little heed. The love of the marvellous, we remarked to each other, was very strong among Andalucians, and excites their inventive powers whenever the word "robber" is introduced into conversation. It so happened, however, that as soon as we had made up our minds to travel the road which bore the worst character of the two, all the reports we had heard seemed wonderfully veracious and consistent. Our double-barrels were accordingly put into a state of preparation, bullets cast, cartridges made, and we set forth full of resolves to be stopped by nothing but our own good will and pleasure. All these preparations, however, came to nought; nobody started up to dispute our determination, and we accomplished our journey unscathed in limb and purse. Once, it is true, when four horsemen bore down upon us, riding across the country abreast, I thought the time had come to test our resolves; on a nearer approach we perceived them to be armed to the teeth; but our calesero, as soon as their visages could be descried, recognised them as people of his acquaintance, who had started that morning to unload a contraband cargo which was expected on the coast. C——, however, who had made up his mind for a skirmish, was loth to be disappointed, and turned a deaf ear to this explanation; he jumped out of the calesa, and strode on ahead to a defensible position; where he halted to

receive the enemy. The object of this movement was perfectly understood by the contrabandistas, who shouted out to him, "No teng' usted cuida'o" (be not uneasy), and without adding more than the usual salutation, passed us at a rapid pace. There was, however, no small reason for the evil reputation borne by this road. Amid all the rumours concerning its insecurity, some of which were exaggerated and others false, there remained many instances of brigandage, the authenticity of which could not be disputed; at the same time, no steps were taken by the authorities to establish patrols, or otherwise provide for the safety of travellers. Every one was therefore compelled either to carry arms or hire an escort; and for better security, it was the fashion to unite in large parties, and effect the passage of the road protected by numbers, and the addition of armed men. Even this precaution sometimes proved unavailing,—an instance of which I have related in a previous chapter.

Although, as I have stated, we encountered nothing to justify the evil character of the road, the day was not fated to pass without incident; such as it was, it partook of a ludicrous rather than a serious aspect, and served to give a mirthful turn to our thoughts, while traversing the uninteresting tract between San Lucar and the Port.

It so happened, that our intended journey having been noised about the town, two travellers proceeding in the same direction had determined to avail themselves of the protection afforded by the terrors of our double-barrels. Our countrymen, I may remark, enjoy in Andalucia the reputation of occasionally doing mad things, and one of them is to stand by their comrades in danger; instead of imitating the Andalusian,



who obeys the first law of nature—generally the only law obeyed here—and withdraws his person as speedily as possible from scenes of strife. For these reasons was our company sought on this occasion; and the honour we could not find it in our hearts to decline, especially when we learnt from our calesero, who communicated this intelligence as we were rattling over the ill-paved streets, that the travellers belonged to the fair sex, and had been waiting in the cold two long hours in order to join company. Moreover, he communicated one or two circumstances that could not fail to deepen the interest we felt, or ought to have felt, in our feminine fellow-travellers: it transpired that the twain consisted of mother and daughter, the latter of whom, an actress, was proceeding to Xeres, to be united that very day to the swain of her choice. As soon as we came in sight of them, a short way out of the town, our calesero, judging that the van was the post of danger, proceeded to place us in front by a manœuvre common enough among whips on the roads here. This consists in driving furiously up to the vehicle ahead, as if with a design of riding it down; then wheeling smartly to the right, and so passing on to the front. The first part was performed very well; we dashed up till our horse's nose came in contact with a small box behind the bride's calesa, the sole luggage of the pair; but in turning aside, our calesero by no means displayed equal expertness: the wheels became locked, and for a moment or two the vehicles wrestled for a fall. I blush to confess that I felt considerably relieved when I saw the near wheel of our antagonists' vehicle rise into the air, thereby portending its approaching downfall; and then the whole affair came with a great crash to the ground, the fair occupants being precipitated from their

seats, and compelled to roll in the dust. Before I had jumped out to assist them, they were on their feet, and unhurt; the mother pale with rage and fear, and the daughter trying to save her fan from the hoofs of the prostrate and kicking horse. To raise up their calesa was the next business, and this we succeeded in doing after some little trouble. While thus engaged, a friend of the bride rode up, who, upon hearing the circumstances of the disaster, volunteered to stay by them and become their escort. In the mean time the pair sat down upon a bank by the road-side, but not in silence. The maternal voice was elevated to the loudest tones of indignation, and poured forth an unbroken stream of reproaches, bitter and vehement. Entertaining no doubt as to the party against whom they were directed, I did not care to listen very attentively at first, and only discovered by a chance word that these wrathful effusions were launched, not against ourselves, the real culprits, but against the luckless daughter, who sat by her side. By some strange process of reasoning, she accused the latter of having caused the mishaps in which they had both shared. "I knew this would happen," she exclaimed; "for it's always the way when I accompany you. I blame nobody for this but you; it's all your fault." These were the last words I heard as we drove off, and left them preparing to follow more leisurely. Some months afterwards I happened to mention this circumstance to a friend; on a sudden he interrupted me, and said, "I met this couple a short time ago. I was proceeding from Cadiz to Seville, in the steamer which plies on the Guadalquivir, when to our misfortune the boat struck upon one of the numerous mud-banks in the river, and in spite of every effort of the crew, remained aground for the night. Among



the passengers on board was this lady, such as you have described her, and a younger one, whom I took to be her daughter: I am, moreover, certain of their being the same pair, from the mother using the expressions you have mentioned; she reproached her daughter as soon as the disaster occurred for being the author of it, and during the night I heard her repeatedly exclaiming, 'It's all your fault; it's all your fault.'"

## CHAPTER V.

THE GUADALQUIVER.—ORANGE-GROVES OF SEVILLE.—CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POPULATION OF THAT CITY.—THE CATHEDRAL.—ITS IMPOSING ASPECT.—THE GIRALDA.—THE LONJA.—THE ALCAZAR.—PETER THE CRUEL.—THE TOBACCO MANUFACTORY.—CARLIST PRISONERS.—THE GARROTE VIL.—EXECUTION OF A CRIMINAL.—THE OLD ALAMEDA.—THE INQUISITION LATTERLY A POLITICAL ENGINE.—A SECRET OF THE PRISON-HOUSE.

THE Guadalquiver is far from being a river upon which the traveller may gaze with rapture. From San Lucar to Seville its tide is dull, its waters cloudy, its current lingering, and its banks canal-like and low. Even the poets who celebrated the other streams of the Peninsula, and sang of the golden sands of the Tagus, could make nothing of its mud and sedge, and have discreetly left it unpraised; the most adventurous among them could only discern that it wore an "olive-bearing coronet," meaning thereby, that the olive flourished luxuriantly around its springs. Such an epithet may with some truth be applied to the upper part of its course, where it flows among slopes on which the olive spreads in thick and dark masses; but below Seville it divests itself by degrees of every feature of beauty till it becomes little else than a mighty drain, meandering leisurely through a vast flat; while, as the steamer follows the windings of the river through these unpicturesque levels, the only living objects visible are the immense herds of cattle which find pasture

there. They browse, however, upon a treacherous soil; as it is elevated only a few feet above the surface of the river, they are liable to be swept away whenever an inundation occurs. This happened to thousands during the winter of 1837, when the "great river" was swollen by long-continued rains to an extent never witnessed before by the dwellers on its banks. Not only were these pastures completely submerged, but the country around Seville was converted into a wide sheet of water dotted with villages debarred from all communication with each other: nor did the city itself escape; that portion of it which lies in the vicinity of the old Alameda was flooded, and for some days rendered impassable.

About two leagues below the city, on the right bank of the river, a spur from the low elevations on that side comes down to the water's edge; on its brow is a chapel marking the site of San Juan d'Alfarache, where it is supposed the Roman town of Osset existed. It is generally late in the evening when the steamer approaches this point, so that the remainder of the voyage is performed in darkness. The traveller, however, hardly requires the powers of vision to tell him he is nearing the queen of Andalucia. Long before the vessel stops, her presence is announced by his entering a cloud of fragrance exhaled by her girdle of orange-groves; so heavy and luscious are the odours of this zone, that the senses feel oppressed; and upon reaching the city, where their influence is lost, one breathes more freely, and experiences a certain sensation of relief.

The times are past when Seville might boast that she was a marvel among cities. Her fame in the present day rests upon the traditions of the past, and upon

the undoubted signs of a wealth and magnificence which once rolled through her streets. Her wonders have all an antique and venerable cast; nothing is modern except the decay which is creeping over them and the city they embellish. Of those which rose by Christian hands, there are few that do not date their foundation from a particular era in her history—the discovery of the New World. This was to Seville, as if a golden wave had suddenly swept up to her walls and as suddenly retired. The flood brought a brilliant but short-lived prosperity, amid which sprang into existence those stately edifices, private as well as public, that now contrast so strikingly with the poverty-stricken air of her population. Yet, although all that could give them life and lustre has long ago departed, though the wealth that once filled their country with pomp and magnificence is lost for ever to Spain, one sees here little of the dreariness observable in most cities that have outlived their golden days. The buoyant spirit of Andalusia still survives to animate the place, and to diffuse its light-hearted gaiety over scenes in which everything bears witness to changed fortunes, and the iron tooth of decay. Her hidalgos saunter through her grass-grown streets, not with moody brows and disconsolate mien, but with an easy indifference to a prospect so familiar, and seem regardless of any other thought but the pleasure of the moment. Give them their paseo, cigar, and café, and their happiness is as complete as was that of their ancestors, who rolled through the city in gilded equipages, attended by trains of lackeys, and entertained each other in splendour and state. The same spirit is observable through all the other classes of society. Every one seems to regard business as a secondary matter in life, and vies

with his neighbour in dedicating as little time to his call as he possibly can. The shopkeeper lounges about his shop for a few hours, and then hies him to the promenade or to the café to join a circle of loquacious friends. The artisan is a close imitator of his master, and may be seen strolling about with his companions at hours when labour in other countries is most industriously pursued. Thus the whole population of Seville appears always to be on the wing, and to be roving about in the enjoyment of an existence as careless as the butterfly's. From this it results that a marked difference between Seville and the other great cities of the province is visibly perceptible to the observer: while the others have bowed to the weight of years and the ruin of their fortunes, and present only a spectacle of sombre desolation, she wears a different aspect though equally stricken by the revolutions of time, and seems bent on forgetting that she ever had been young. Indeed, it would seem as if all, from the highest to the lowest, lived only for amusement. Here are to be seen at the public spectacles thousands, whose appearance causes one to wonder how they had obtained the few pence necessary to command admission, so plainly is want stamped on their exterior. Yet, in nothing more than this is the nature of the Sevillano shown: he will readily postpone the claims of hunger to the enjoyment of some favourite diversion, and reserve the greatest portion of his earnings for a few hours at the Plaza de Toros or theatre. The same spirit is to be witnessed among those who aspire to be called genteel. Amid the throng on the promenade none are more scrupulously attired than they; their mantillas and capas are of the best; yet, follow them home to their evening



meal, and the scanty fare to which they sit down reveals at what cost this ostentation and pleasure is purchased. A little bread and salad, washed down with a glass of water, is the repast of those whose garb bespoke opulence and abundance at home. All this outward seeming has, however, the effect of making Seville what it is—a place which so well conceals the ravages of old age beneath the youthful bearing of its people, as almost to deceive the traveller into the belief that its prosperity is not utterly extinct.

This city of eighty thousand inhabitants has extended its limits but little since the dominion of the Moors; the wall they constructed still forms its boundaries, and without it the traveller, except at one or two localities, passes at once from the shadows of houses into the sunshine and solitude of an Andalucian landscape. At whatever gate he emerges, the scene is singularly expressive of loneliness; he looks around him, and beholds neither suburb nor villa, but perhaps a solitary venta, or possibly a cemetery; beyond, he surveys an expanse which, whether it be uncultivated or fertile, is always unenclosed. In general he finds himself in the midst of silence, so that, though the heavens are of the purest blue, and the light falls with brilliant effect upon the scenery, and the atmosphere is clear and limpid to a degree, the prospect withal is so unnaturally lifeless, as to send him back into the city with a strange feeling of depression. Here he wanders through streets so narrow and tortuous that he will perhaps describe the capital of Andalusia as a dense mass of building, pierced by a bewildering network of labyrinths. Should he venture alone among their intricacies, he speedily loses all knowledge of the points of the compass, and becomes



as helplessly lost as if he had penetrated too far into some subterranean catacombs. Here and there a vacant space affords him an opportunity of discerning the spires and towers of churches, overtopping the surrounding houses; and taking these as landmarks, he starts afresh to pursue his intended route; but the attempt is hopeless: on diving into the dark lanes, which seem to conduct him to his destination, he finds himself incessantly turning, and not unfrequently arrives at the very spot from which he had set out.

Happily, however, for the solitary explorer, all the edifices most worthy of note in the city are situated in one particular quarter, and within sight of each other. The Cathedral, Alcazar, Tobacco manufactory, and Lonja, stand at its southern extremity, in close proximity to the wall on that side, and at no great distance from the river. The first-named structure is beyond all question as proud a monument as was ever raised by Spanish hands to the glory of their faith. "Let us," said its founders, "build a church so vast, that those who view it completed shall deem us to have been mad." So gigantic a project was in keeping with the religious enthusiasm that animated Spain in the fifteenth century; and the undertaking having been begun, was vigorously prosecuted by the pious ardour of successive generations. Amid internal feuds and wars with the Moors, the pile continued to rise until the intentions of the founders were realised by the last stone being placed, amid solemn ceremonies, in the year 1519, exactly one hundred and seventy years after its foundation. As it now stands, a more imposing spectacle can hardly be witnessed than this cathedral; in vastness and grandeur of proportion its form towers among the mighty works of old around it,

and presents an aspect of majesty that is indescribably impressive. I will not weary the reader with details, but here are assembled the boldest conceptions as well as the lurking minutiae of Gothic architecture. Giant buttresses, noble arches, airy spires, and sculptured windows, are seen beneath that veil of stony tracery which this architecture delighted to throw over its temples; and all, even to the most wind-beaten pinnacle, stand forth fresh and unclouded by the lapse of centuries. The interior is no less striking. Push aside the leathern hanging at the door, and you suddenly pass from the dazzling glare of noonday into the deep shadows of evening. A vast area of vaulted gloom is then dimly visible, into which the observer cannot move without experiencing those religious impressions it was the object of the architect to instil through the medium of his art. Around are colossal pillars, rising like towers into the mysterious darkness that shrouds the place, and overwhelming him with a feeling of his own insignificance as he surveys their enormous bulk; through the upper windows some pale rays straggle in with all the effect of moonlight; the fumes of incense are floating on the air; figures in white and black vestments are gliding to and fro over the marble pavement; a solemnising silence unites with the shadowy light to inspire sentiments of awe; the stillness is broken occasionally by loud whispers, or the muttered prayers of kneeling worshippers;—in a word, nothing is left undone by the faith that raised this temple to make it the abode of high and holy impressions.

Deeply are they felt at first; but, like all impressions connected with the imagination alone, their effect is of a transient nature; they become weaker on every occasion of repeating the visit; and ere long, one contem-

plates the grandeur and magnitude of this consecrated structure as little moved by a devotional spirit as the priestly attendants who minister within its precincts.

These personages performed their duties with an air of listless indifference, which showed how wearisome was their daily task of ceremonial routine. It seemed, too, as if the constant exercise of their calling had banished every ray of intelligence from their minds, for every countenance wore an aspect of vacancy that was painful to witness. If, however, as was probable, these men had grown up from youth in the service of the cathedral, it was then no difficult matter to account for their stolid looks and careless demeanour. There was enough in the conduct of the juvenile acolytes about the cathedral to explain this, for a more graceless set of urchins never made consecrated ground the scene of their pranks. While mass was going on at the altar, they were sometimes to be seen at the back of it, either engaged in a game at hide and seek, or in a bout of fisticuffs; their most common occupation was, however, gambling in some nook with a dirty pack of cards, or playing at draughts upon one of the benches, upon which they had ingeniously carved with their knives a draught-board.

Within the interior of the cathedral are a number of chapels, in which are to be seen the masterpieces of the Seville school of painting. Here are collected the works of Roelas, Zurbaran, and Herrera, and above all, those of the incomparable Murillo. As this famous master was born within a few leagues of the city, he made it his pride to adorn the walls of its cathedrals, hospitals, and convents, with the choicest productions of his pencil; it is only here that his marvellous powers are to be appreciated, as one beholds the beauty and

success which he imparts to every subject his fancy has selected, and the ease with which he has mastered the greatest difficulties of his art. There is one painting in the cathedral, the infant Saviour adored by St. Antony of Padua, that would alone place him in the first rank of painters. The attitude of the infant, surrounded by angels, and bending from the heavens to bless the kneeling saint, so truly represents "treading on ambient air," as to raise the admiration of the beholder to the highest pitch while contemplating the vivid reality the painter has given to a subject that seems almost beyond the power of his art to attempt.

At the north-eastern angle of the cathedral rises the famous tower known as the Giralda. Of all the structures in the city there is not one that will remain so impressed upon the traveller's memory as this colossal tower; for, besides its singular form, it is the first object he descries when approaching Seville, and the last to recede into the distance when quitting it. Under the Moorish domination this was the tower from whence the muezzin summoned the Moslems to their devotions in the mosque which formerly occupied the site of the cathedral; it was then only two hundred and fifty feet in height, and was terminated by four gilded globes, the size and splendour of which were the themes of Moorish admiration. These, however, were hurled from their airy thrones by an earthquake in the year 1396; and for a hundred and seventy years the tower remained in a partially ruinous state, until the Cabildo undertook its restoration, and added a hundred feet to its height. The summit is crowned by a gigantic statue of Faith, fashioned of brass, and placed as a weathercock for the benefit of the faithful; hence is derived the name of the tower, Giralda in Castilian signifying



a weathercock. The ascent is far less fatiguing than that of structures less elevated, for in place of climbing a series of staircases, the traveller mounts by an inclined plane which runs in a corkscrew fashion from the bottom up to the belfry. Supposing him to have attained this lofty vantage-ground, he looks down upon a panorama, the minutest details of which are commanded by his position. Below is a sea of dark-coloured roofs, amid which steeples, domes, and turrets, rise like rocks above the surface of some turbid and agitated tide; here and there are yawning cavities marking the sites of squares or markets; while the furrows that run in all directions indicate the main streets by which the city is traversed. From the ancient walls, which are dotted by numberless Moorish towers, commences the spacious plain, the natural fertility of which had indubitably laid the foundation of the city's greatness. On the west it is bounded, at no great distance, by a low range of elevations; but in every other direction the ground swells gently up till it meets the horizon, after a rise of many leagues. This wide expanse, so far as the eye can reach, displays at the fitting season a rich and varied prospect of cultivation—rich, rather from the spontaneous bounties of the soil than from the industry and skill employed to call forth its treasures. Nearer the city are clusters of orange-groves and vineyards; then come broad tracts of growing corn—for the word fields would be inappropriate here, where fences and hedges are hardly known; and at wide intervals a few white villages glisten in the sunshine. In the midst winds the Guadalquivir, describing as it rolls silently along a succession of wide curves that increase in intricacy after it has passed the city.

At the base of the Giralda is the Patio de Naranjos,



or orange court, another relic of the mosque. Here the Moslems performed the ablutions enjoined by the Prophet, ere entering the holy temple of their faith; and doubtless there were then flowing for that purpose more fountains than the solitary one which now occupies the centre of the court. Its falling waters, together with the orange-trees dispersed around, give an air of peaceful seclusion to the court, and successfully dissipate the gloom cast by the presence of the cathedral and church of the Sagrario on two sides, and the high and massive Moorish walls that bound it on the others. In the northern wall is the entrance through a Moorish gateway, to which has been given the name of the Puerta del Perdon, or gate of Pardon.

Close to the cathedral on the south—so close, indeed; as to be almost overshadowed—stands the Lonja of Exchange of Seville. Unlike its Gothic neighbour, whose vast proportions rise majestically to the eye, this edifice is, on the whole, simple and unpretending, though spacious and elegantly designed. It was the work of Juan de Herrera, the architect of the Escorial, and consists of a square, each side of which is 200 feet long, and adorned with pilasters in the Tuscan order of architecture. Within is a spacious court, surrounded by arcades on the basement story, above which were apartments connected with the transaction of mercantile affairs. The Lonja, however, now stands to record only the magnificent anticipations of its founders. It was here that the commerce of Spain and the Indies was to be centred; here were to assemble the merchants of Europe, and behold the golden streams which flowed from the distant provinces of the Spanish Empire; now it is deserted and grass-grown, and for 200 years has only opened its gates to the passing traveller. From



*View Engraving del.*

*Puerta de la Carne*

*J. W. Cook, sc.*



the basement a wide and beautiful staircase of native marble conducts to a suite of apartments running round three-fourths of the edifice, and all exhibiting a profusion of ornament. Here are deposited the archives of the Indies—all that remains to Spain of her connection with the Western World. As you cast a glance through the trellis-work that protects these documents from injury, what a host of associations is awakened! The faint and scarcely legible characters traced on these ancient rolls are in the hand-writing of those who first shouted the battle-cries of the Old World on the shores of the New, and won empires for their masters. We look upon the despatches of Columbus, Pizarro, and Cortes, written amid the scenes they were the first to reveal to wondering Europe, and some of them probably penned by hands that were fresh from bloody triumphs over the hosts of Mexico and Peru. Besides these memorials there were others of a different nature, and which, together with those that I have named, must to a Spaniard make the round of these apartments fraught with painful recollections. In one case I saw a series of papers entitled "Contracts for provisioning the Invincible Armada"—that mighty armament in which were shipwrecked the pride and power of Spain, when both seemed proof against disasters. In the others were records more or less connected with the history of her vast colonial empire, of which scarcely a fragment now acknowledges her flag; and the inscriptions they bore were speaking comments upon the fatal policy that directed her counsels whenever the colonies were concerned. From the despatches of Pizarro to those of the last viceroys, they bore witness to violence and oppression—then, as now, the sole instruments which the Spanish race employs to facilitate the task of

government. Of the evil effects of that policy it is not here necessary to speak, but none seem more likely to be lasting than those connected with the helpless dependency to which it reduced the mother-country. For ages, Spain was little better than the pensioner of her colonies, existing upon the tribute she exacted from them, and eating the fruits of their labours. When they escaped from her grasp, she found herself, like the spendthrift whose acres have passed from his hands, not only in beggary, but unfitted by her past life for rising again to wealth. Her arts and manufactures had in the mean time all but disappeared; the natural resources of her soil has been neglected: habits of industry had ceased to exist; and there had grown up among her people and their rulers a disposition to lean upon others rather than rely upon themselves. Such a state of things meets the traveller's eye wherever he moves; and he cannot mix much with Spaniards, or converse with them upon political subjects, without noticing that they would gladly get others to do what ought and should be done by themselves alone. They would still seek foreign assistance, in whatever difficulty they might be placed, and think it no shame to have employed foreign troops to fight their own battles.

To the east of the Lonja, a high wall, surmounted with Moorish battlements, hides from view the Alcazar of Seville, once the fortress and palace of its Arab kings, and the residence of many Castilian monarchs. Within its precincts, the traveller who has commenced his tour at Cadiz will behold for the first time the architecture of the Arabs as it is displayed in the construction and decoration of a regal abode. The characteristic horse-shoe arch is everywhere used; walls and roofs are adorned with arabesque devices;



the marble columns are slender and quaintly fashioned ; and the mingling of open courts with halls and corridors gives a thoroughly Oriental air to this ancient edifice. By far the most imposing of its halls is that of the ambassadors', which may vie with any in the Alhambra in point of spaciousness and embellishment. It is a double cube placed vertically, being twice as high as it is long : and the effect of this, heightened as it is by the remains of the once gorgeous decorations that overspread the walls, and the gloom that fills the upper portion, is inconceivably striking. In the days of the Arab kingdom, the scene must have been one of no common magnificence when this noble hall was prepared to receive the ambassadors of neighbouring potentates. The colouring on the walls, which is now dim and faded, must then have been bright and dazzling to the eye, and, joined to the gold which was lavished on the roof, and shone in a thousand shapes, could not fail to present a spectacle which to the Oriental imagination of the beholders must have seemed the work of enchantment. On the marble floor the throne of the monarch was raised ; and here, surrounded by the splendour of his court, he gave audience to the strangers. If the object of all this display was to impress them with a notion of the power and riches of the kingdom, nothing, indeed, was wanting to create that impression, and they must have departed bewildered and overawed by the spectacle of barbaric pomp they witnessed.

Like almost all palaces, this one has a blood-stained spot to show. In the Patio de Azulejos was murdered the master of Santiago, Don Fadrique, by the orders and almost under the eye of his half-brother, Peter the Cruel. The tragedy is commemorated in an

ancient ballad, that for pathos and touching simplicity has few equals in the Spanish language; and enlists every sympathy of the reader for the fate of the master, whose manly yet trusting nature it contrasts with the perfidy of the kingly murderer. It is singular, however, that connected with this monster of cruelty, there are more traditions preserved in Seville than with regard to any other of his royal brethren on the Castilian throne, San Fernando himself not excepted; and it would even seem as if he had been a favourite with the population of the city. The truth is, that the ferocious deeds his biographers record were done upon the nobles alone; and that, however perfidious himself, he suffered no acts of injustice to be committed with impunity upon the humbler class of his subjects. At the gate of the Monteria, the principal court in the Alcazar, there once existed an elevated platform of stone, surmounted by a chair of marble. Here the monarch, according to the Eastern fashion of dispensing justice at the gates of a palace or city, gave audiences to the people, heard complaints, and redressed grievances. By such means he gained their goodwill; and some of his decisions that have descended to our own times bear the stamp of a species of justice that was well calculated to win the popular approbation, inasmuch as it was based upon the law of retaliation, always an acceptable one to the rude and unreflecting. From among many judgments attributed to him I shall quote one that has been preserved by tradition, probably from its being regarded at the time as a masterpiece of wisdom and justice.

It so happened that one of the canons of the cathedral had seduced the daughter of a poor shoemaker: on the latter upbraiding him with his crime, an altercation

ensued, the result of which was that the outraged father was stabbed to the heart. So atrocious a deed could not without scandal be passed over by the church, and the criminal was accordingly summoned before her tribunal; his sentence was a mockery of punishment, being merely the suspension from his ecclesiastical functions for one year. At the expiry of that period the priest was assisting in the procession of the Corpus Christi, when among the bystanders there happened to be the son of the murdered man. At the sight of the murderer, thus walking abroad unpunished, the youth forgot everything but the thirst for vengeance, and slew him in the same manner that his father had perished. He was immediately seized and conducted to the king, in order that he might be summarily dealt with for the heinous crime of slaying an ecclesiastic. On the monarch being apprised of the motives which had urged the young man to commit this deed, he inquired what sentence had been imposed on the ecclesiastic for the homicide of the father, and was informed that one year's suspension from his duties was the total of his punishment. On learning this, the king next demanded the occupation of the youth, and finding that he was a shoemaker, like his father before him, condemned him to one year's suspension from his vocation of making shoes.

Behind the Alcazar, and on the outside of the city wall, stands a huge edifice of modern construction, whose aspect causes no little perplexity as to its real purpose; for while the exterior has the air and proportions of a palace, it is surrounded by a dry ditch, and would, on a pinch, stand a short siege. This is the royal manufactory of tobacco; and, when I first beheld it, was invested with a more than usually warlike

appearance, defences and batteries being thrown up at each angle, and all communication with the city cut off. This was done with the intent of resisting the forces of Gomez, who a short time before had swept through Andalucia, and at one time threatened to pay the city a hostile visit; but after approaching within a few miles of it, he wheeled abruptly to the south, and pursued his march almost to the gates of Gibraltar.

In the lower part of the establishment is the manufactory of snuff, the machinery of which is put in motion by various teams of mules, whose beauty and docility were a contradiction to the received notions upon these points. With scarcely an exception, they were fine handsome animals, not less than sixteen hands high, and with coats as sleek and glossy as satin. Neither words nor whip were required to direct their movements, but at the ringing of a bell twice they started on their rounds; and on its ringing three times, the whole came to a stop, and so remained until the signal was again given to move on.

From this scene of silence and method, it was somewhat of a transition to enter the vast apartments in which were congregated the female makers of cigars, and where a perfect Babel of tongues stunned the ear. I believe that about three thousand are thus employed; and as there appeared to be no restraint on their conversational powers, the reader may conceive that so many feminine voices in shrill exercise produced an effect that left anything but an agreeable impression behind it. I must, however, do them the justice to say that their hands were no less busy than their tongues, never ceasing to roll up the tobacco into the required shape; and before each maker there were generally half a dozen bundles of cigars to bear witness

to her dexterity and industry. On an average, each pair of hands makes two hundred cigars a-day. In another apartment we beheld about six hundred men engaged in the same employment. In going through this room, I was particularly struck by the pale and cadaverous aspect of every countenance, and could not help forming impressions unfavourable to the wholesomeness of the occupation. On inquiring, however, of one man, who seemed to be the "oldest inhabitant" of the place, he informed me that such was not the case, and that he had been forty years in the establishment without suffering from any worse malady than pains in the chest. In summer, it sometimes happened that the odour of the tobacco caused some of the workmen to become giddy and sick; but beyond that he knew of no worse effects from inhaling its fumes, and that the mortality was not greater among them than in other pursuits. As the manufacture of tobacco is a royal monopoly, there are no other establishments for the making of cigars than those under the Crown, of which, besides this one, there may be half a dozen scattered over Spain. Notwithstanding, however, the immense numbers here fabricated, it is questionable whether the supply is equal to the demand in a country like this, where the cigar is to the inhabitants the breath of their nostrils, and to the poorest, even more than to the higher classes, has become a necessary of life. In spite, therefore, of the rigours of a prohibitive system, a vast deal of smuggling goes on; and as it is the interest of every smoker—that is, of every Spaniard—to give it encouragement, the revenue must be defrauded to a serious extent. Indeed, the defiance of the law seems to be attended with complete impunity. It is no uncommon sight to behold men hawking about tobacco



from house to house, with little show of secrecy. For this, the penalty according to law, is ten years of presidio; but in effect it has become completely inoperative, as is shown by the fact I have stated.

The words law and presidio are connected in one's thoughts with places of durance, of which there is but one in Seville. The old prison was situated in the Calle de las Sierpes, but now exists no more, having been demolished in order to make place for a splendid hotel and café. Previously, however, to its destruction I visited it, in order to indulge my curiosity with a glimpse of a class of prisoners who were its temporary inmates, and of whom I had heard a great deal. While Spain was the theatre of the Carlist war, one of those roving bands that supported the cause of the Pretender, by sparing neither friend nor foe, had descended into Valentia with a view of ravaging the country, which was generally favourable to the Queen's cause; here, however, the plundering horde, for it scarcely deserved the name of army, was encountered by the royal forces and effectually checked, being routed with the loss of many prisoners. These were now lodged in the old prison, previous to their conveyance to a much securer abode within the sea-girt fortifications of Cadiz, which at that period of the war was the general receptacle for those "facciosos" who might be captured on the borders of the Southern provinces. In the first story of the building, which was in a partially dilapidated condition, I found the quarters of the officers and men. A small detachment of "nacionales" kept guard, and occupied the corridor that ran round the patio or open court that forms the centre of every Andalusian dwelling; at the various doors opening into it, sentries with loaded muskets were posted. I was far from expecting

to see anything resembling regular uniform on the persons of the prisoners, but I confess I was unprepared for the rabble-like appearance they presented. Some were mere boys of fourteen or fifteen years of age, and appeared to have been supplied from that swarm of youthful beggary and crime that infests the streets of Spanish cities. These were confined in a cell apart from the others, and on my approach desisted from their squabbles to assume the mendicant's whine and solicit charity. The others had nothing either in their bearing or habiliments to denote the soldier. As I looked through the iron grating that served as door to the gallery in which they were secured, I saw what seemed a mob of peasantry of rather more savage aspect than usual.

Few were without the Valencian manta, their cloak by day, and blanket by night; beneath which were visible tattered and mud-stained garments of every hue and shape peculiar to the northern provinces. The greater number sat on the floor, supporting themselves against the walls of the gallery; and in this attitude remained as immovably fixed as if chained to the spot. The most striking feature of the scene was the silence that reigned among the wretched throng. It rarely happens that the national vivacity is depressed, but here it was thoroughly quenched, and one and all seemed too dispirited to exchange words, or even to look at each other. Generally they sat as I have described, gazing moodily on the opposite wall, or reclining their heads on their knees, either asleep or feigning to be so. I had asked and obtained permission to enter this den, but my purpose changed during the few minutes that I made these observations. Through the gratings there poured forth from the

interior an effluvium that resembled the breath of the pestilence, and of so sickening an effect that with difficulty I retained my position for the short time that I overlooked the scene within. The impossibility of inhaling such a poisonous atmosphere without experiencing worse consequences was self-evident ; and when I turned away from the spot, it was with pity for the wretched beings thus crowded together into a narrow compass, and too surely imbibing and communicating the seeds of disease and death. These anticipations were unhappily realised not long afterwards. A short time after their removal to Cadiz, typhus fever of a malignant kind broke out among the prisoners, and swept them off by scores. Their fate was no doubt connected with the loathsome state of the prisons into which they were thrust at the end of each journey, but it was not a little accelerated by sheer starvation. The only allowance for food supplied by the authorities was a halfpenny per diem to each prisoner, out of which he had to sustain existence in the best way he could. Generally speaking, he purchased with one farthing a crust of bread, and with the other a salad ; and unless he succeeded in begging or stealing an addition, this was all the fare upon which he supported the fatigue of a long march. From these causes it happened that few survived their journey to Cadiz, for those who did not sink by the way were so exhausted and feeble, that on the fever breaking out they were cut off after a few days' illness.

The inhuman treatment of prisoners was a feature common to the contending parties in the civil war, and it would even seem as if, on certain occasions, they vied with each other in inflicting cruelties on all who fell into their hands. Of the atrocities perpetrated by

the Carlists I both heard and read much ; and making every allowance for exaggeration, it was not to be concealed that their cause was stained by barbarities that would have become a race of savages.\* On the other hand, the Queen's forces were not slow to retaliate ; and the murder of Cabrera's mother, by one of the generals of the Constitutional army, will ever remain one of the foulest deeds committed during that unhappy contest.

Following my conductor to another grated door, which he unlocked and pushed open, I passed forward without inquiry, and found myself in a small and gloomy chamber, lighted by a narrow window high up in the wall. My first impulse was to turn back, for this was the cell of the officers ; and as I considered that curiosity was hardly a sufficient excuse for intrusion among them, I felt I had no business there. However, it was too late to retreat, and, moreover, my entrance was unheeded by the whole party, whose attention seemed too deeply engrossed in various ways to notice the presence of a stranger ; so that if unwittingly I enacted the part of the "Curioso Impertinente," I could reflect with satisfaction that it was before an audience whose eyes were sealed. The

\* In a pamphlet published at Valencia, by an officer of the Constitutional army, who had been taken prisoner by the Carlists, it was stated that he and his comrades, after being subjected to privations and inhumanities of no ordinary kind, were at one time denied food by their captors for such a length of time as to be driven by hunger to the revolting necessity of partially devouring the corpse of a fellow-prisoner. The statement is so horrible that one hesitates to yield it belief ; yet after all, it is scarcely credible that it would be publicly made by one whose comrades were at the time alive, and in a position to give it a contradiction, if untrue.

cell was tenanted by six officers, whose beds encroached upon its narrow dimensions, and scarcely left a passage for walking. Up and down this one of them was pacing with hasty strides, as if seeking relief from anxious thoughts; the others, with one exception, sat round a bed, which they had converted into a card-table, and by the aid of a dirty pack of cards, were buried in oblivion of everything but the interests of the game, upon which some small coins were staked. The remaining prisoner, though excluded from the game, displayed even more excitement than the players in its progress, and eagerly bent over it, while his eyes followed with the watchfulness of a lynx every card that fell from their hands. There was nothing in the appearance of these men to mark the soldier or the gentleman. Their uniform was simple and unpretending, consisting of a surtout and pantaloons of green cloth, with a cap of the same colour, the whole being devoid of lace or ornament of any kind. Indeed, had they been clothed in the ordinary garb of the country they would have passed for farmers or shopkeepers, from which class it is probable they had originally sprung.

Strange to say, although human life is but cheaply valued in Spain, nothing is more rare than to see it forfeited for the commission of crimes. As regards the infliction of punishments for offences of an atrocious kind, the law there is as severe as it is in our own country; and, like it, demands blood for blood. There is, however, a manifest dislike to carrying its last sentence into effect; and any plea or subterfuge is accepted by the ministers of justice in order to cover this aversion, which without exception they share with the nation at large. Whence this state of feeling



arises it is difficult to say ; but it is certainly a most striking anomaly in the national character, that the same people which hesitates not to butcher its prisoners in cold blood, will shrink from enforcing the deliberate award of justice when it demands the life of a murderer. I had occasion to make these remarks on witnessing the execution of a criminal by the "garrote vil," a mode of inflicting death practised, I believe, nowhere but in Spain. The sufferer was stained with the blood of two victims—namely, his wife and her aunt, both of whom his navaja had deprived of life. It appeared that on account of his profligacy his wife had forsaken him, and taken refuge under the roof of her aunt, where she was afforded shelter for some time. At length the ruffian indicated a desire for her return, which was met with a refusal ; and on proceeding to the house where she resided, an altercation on the subject ensued between the parties, the result of which was his drawing his knife upon the defenceless pair, and wounding them so desperately as to cause their death in a few days. Being speedily apprehended, his trial commenced at the instance of the husband of the aunt ; and it is worthy of remark, as illustrative of the tardy pace of justice in this land, that eighteen months elapsed between the commission of this murderous act and its expiation on the scaffold. According to the procedure in criminal cases, his trial commenced in the court of "primera instancia" of San Lucar la Mayor, within whose jurisdiction the outrage was perpetrated ; and, after the usual delay, was terminated by his condemnation to ten years' imprisonment. From this sentence the husband of the murdered woman appealed to a higher court, which reversed the decision of the inferior one, and imposed the penalty of death by the



garrote vil. Another appeal was, however, permitted by law for the accused, and he availed himself of it; but in the end the last sentence was confirmed, and, as a preliminary to his execution, he was placed "en capilla." This ceremony is emphatically the preparation for death; the criminal is now bid to resign every hope in this world, and to think only of eternity. For this purpose two days are allowed him, during which time a priest is in attendance day and night, whose office it is to prepare the guilty wretch for his approaching doom, and to administer such consolations as the Roman Catholic creed provides for these occasions. On the morning of the third day the capilla terminates, and he is led forth to execution.

This closing scene of a criminal's career is now transferred to a spot which was formerly dedicated to very different purposes; and nothing more strikingly marks an altered state of feeling in Catholic Spain than the indifference with which the transmutation is regarded. Without the ancient wall of the city, and not far from the bridge across the Guadalquiver, stands a huge pile of building which was once a convent of Augustinos descalzos, and was commonly known by the title of the Convento del Populo. It received this name from the circumstance of a notable miracle having occurred in the neighbourhood; and as the performer in the wondrous spectacle was too holy an object to be sheltered in a private dwelling, it was forthwith committed to the custody of the Augustines, in order to be publicly displayed for the benefit of the faithful. It happened that, during a great inundation in the year 1626, the waters of the river entered the vestibule of a house not far distant from the convent, and rose up to a picture of Nuestra Señora del Populo, which was suspended

there. Still continuing to rise, the tide detached it from the wall; and, as the story goes, for three days afterwards it was seen floating upright on the surface of the river, while the lamp that was usually kept burning before it still followed in faithful attendance without sinking or being extinguished. The holy fathers lost no time in claiming this wonderful picture, whose virtues could not fail to sanctify the roof under which it rested; and it was accordingly placed in their convent, which, from this event, began to be known as that of the Populo. The time, however, arrived when monachism was suppressed in Spain; and the convent being at the same time confiscated, was applied by the government to the uses of the state, and converted into a prison for every class of delinquents. Among the other alterations consequent upon this change, there was constructed at the back, which faces the Plaza de Toros, the place of execution for criminals. This consisted of a platform raised to a level with the top of the lofty wall surrounding the convent, and so placed as to overlook a space of ground calculated to contain a large assemblage of spectators. A short time before the fatal hour sounded, I was on this spot, which I expected to see filled with a dense crowd. In this, however, I was mistaken: so far from witnessing the multitude which a similar spectacle would draw in England, I beheld only a gathering neither numerous nor respectable; such as it was, it was wholly composed of the lowest class of the populace. The greater part of them were formed into groups, which spread over the area without preventing a passage from one side to the other; a liberty which the water-venders were not slow to turn to advantage, as was evident from the drawling cries that rose from every quarter. As yet, the platform,

round which ran a slight iron railing, was without an occupant, so that there was displayed in full view the apparatus of death rising in grim state from the centre. It was as simple and as devoid of repulsive features as such an instrument could be, yet the headsman's axe was uncertain and lingering compared with its fatal embrace. The machine was an arm-chair, solidly constructed of dark wood; to the back was attached a substantial post, about four feet high. Just about the place where the neck of a sitter would reach, something like an iron chain could be observed. This is the immediate instrument of death, for the chain being put round the neck of the criminal, is tightened by means of an iron bar in the hands of the executioner, who uses it in the same manner that the waggoner secures his bales, by twisting with a wooden staff the cords that bind them. A turn or two of the bar suffices to produce suffocation, and that with less amount of pain to the condemned wretch—or, at all events, with fewer tokens of suffering—than probably any other method of extinguishing life adopted by the penal code of civilised nations. Shortly after the clock of the cathedral had sounded the appointed hour, a few soldiers appeared upon the platform and took up their station at the back of it; then came some officials, clothed in black, among whom the executioner and his attendant were to be distinguished by the professional way in which they inspected the apparatus I have described; and finally, after a slight delay, the criminal himself came into view.

Neither groans nor execrations greeted his appearance, and the deepest silence prevailed while he moved to the chair, though with a feeble step. As soon as he had placed himself in it, the executioners advanced to

perform the first part of their office, which consists in binding the legs and arms of the criminal to the corresponding parts of the chair. This was the work of a few moments, during which I had opportunity to note the remarkable garment in which he was arrayed. It was a robe that enveloped him from the neck to the feet, so that, with the exception of the head, his person was wholly concealed; and its singularity arose from the strangeness of the colours, which were white and yellow, the latter being apparently daubed over the other in great splashes. It is difficult to give an idea of the extraordinary spectacle presented by the wretched man as he sat encased in this gaudy and fantastic death-gear, which seemed to mock the pale visage that surmounted it. Such, however, has been the usage in Spain for ages; and the murderer and the heretic have marched in this attire, the one to the scaffold and the other to the stake, bearing the ignominy of which its colours and devices are supposed to be emblematical. The last strap being firmly braced, the executioners retired, and gave place to a priest, who formed one of the surrounding group: he now came forward to receive the last confession of the criminal, and administer to him the consolations of his faith. For this purpose he bent his ear down to the mouth of the other, and raising the skirt of his black robe, drew it over his own head as well as that of the speaker, in order that no part of their conference might reach the bystanders near him. This, however, was perhaps a needless precaution, for as soon as he proceeded to his duty, the others on the stage retired to its furthest limits, and left him alone with the confessing sinner. When his task was done, and he had withdrawn to the back of the platform, the executioner once more stepped for-

ward, and grasped the fatal bar, while an assistant placed himself at his right hand. The criminal then began to recite the Apostles' Creed, every word of which, as his voice was clear and firm, was distinctly audible, even at the distance where I stood. When he had pronounced the words "Y en su unico hijo Jesu Christo," the bar revolved with the quickness of thought, the assistant cast at the same instant a black cloth over his face, and his lips were sealed for ever. At the same time the exclamation, "Ave Maria purissima!" burst with a shout from the lips of the spectators, some of whom continued to repeat it for a few moments, as if it could still reach his ears. He was, however, beyond the influence of mortal sounds, as death appeared to be nearly instantaneous: a convulsive quivering of the limbs for a second or two was all that indicated the struggle of existence parting with its earthly frame; and when it was over, and the cloth had been removed from his countenance, his features exhibited no traces of pain or suffering, but were as composed and placid as those of a sleeper. The crowd did not linger long upon the place after this last act of the ceremony was performed, and before half an hour elapsed it was deserted by all but the few stragglers it usually displayed.

At the north-western extremity of the city there is to be seen a spacious promenade, that, with its alleys of trees and stone benches, seems planted like an oasis in the midst of the dense mass of houses which cover that quarter. This is called the Old Alameda, and although now abandoned to solitude and neglect, under its shady elms, in the palmy days of Seville, were its daughters and gay gallants wont to assemble. Here was generally placed the scene of those adventures which



the older Spanish novelists and dramatists loved to connect with the capital of Andalucia. Since, however, the construction of those beautiful walks which extend along the bank of the Guadalquiver to the southward, and which well merit their name of "Las Delicias,"—for, while wandering amid that leafy city of tree, flower, and shrub, the spectator feels as if transported to a scene of enchantment—since that period the old Alameda has fallen from its high estate, and sees few traversing its far-famed avenues. At the southern extremity stand two time-worn columns, part of the ancient temple of Hercules, erected by the Romans: these now support statues of Hercules and Cæsar, also the relics of Roman art, but which, as long inscriptions testify, have been dedicated by Spanish servility to the emperors Charles the Fifth and Philip the Second. The most striking object, however, that intrudes upon the Alameda, is the gloomy and deserted edifice at its northern angle. Here, after many changes, the tribunal of the Inquisition for the last time held its dark and secret meetings, and carried on the work of persecution against freedom of thought and liberty of conscience. Originally the edifice was possessed by the Jesuits, and was long a college, in connexion with their order, for the education of poor students; but, on their expulsion from the kingdom, the Inquisition sought and obtained licence to set up their court within its walls. Previous to that time, the seat of the tribunal was in the ancient Moorish fortress that protected the suburb of Triana, on the opposite side of the river: probably that structure was selected from the number and security of its dungeons, which were then the chief agents in the conversion of the unhappy Jews, and in reconciling, as it was termed, the conquered

Moors to the Catholic faith. Established here in 1481, the Office proceeded to its accursed work of imprisoning, torturing, and burning; and by this means, as an inscription on the walls triumphantly recorded, succeeded before the year 1524 in causing twenty thousand heretics to abjure their errors. In the same detestable spirit it proclaimed, that more than a thousand persons, obstinately wedded to their heresies, "had been delivered to the fire, and burnt." The ancient fortress having, however, fallen into a ruinous state, was abandoned by the Holy Office, who transferred their tribunal to the city, and after various changes of residence were finally accommodated with the vacant college of the Jesuits. Here they exercised their powers until the Inquisition was extinguished throughout Spain, in the year 1820. The edifice then became a military barrack; but during a popular commotion in 1823, some rioters entered it, and accidentally setting fire to a store of powder which it contained, a considerable portion of the building at the back was demolished, and now lies a mass of shattered and blackened walls. Since that event, which probably rendered it unfit for the services of the state, this handsome edifice has been consigned to abandonment and neglect, and now confronts with ill-omened aspect its partner in desolation, the once gay and crowded Alameda.

Of the Quemadero, or structure upon which the victims of the Inquisition perished by fire, no traces now remain. Its site was placed without the walls of the city, between the Puerta de la Carne and the Cementerio General; but in 1809 it was razed to the ground by the French, and that so effectually as to efface every vestige of its existence. According to

report, its shape was an oblong square, the material used being brick ; and at each corner stood a pillar sustaining a statue of terra-cotta. Tradition, moreover, relates that the first to expire upon the pile was the artificer who constructed it : it is certain, however, that the last to be committed to its flames was a blind beata, or sister of charity, in the year 1781 ; but in her case the corpse was burnt at the stake, death having been previously inflicted by another mode.

Many years previous to its abolition, the Inquisition had ceased to take cognisance of heretical depravity, as it was styled, and had become little else than a political engine in the hands of Absolutism. Its dungeons were filled as usual, and the scaffold from time to time received its tribute of victims ; but I doubt much if, among the numbers who thus suffered, a single one was immolated for denying the established faith of the country. The truth is, that during that period there had grown up among the enlightened class, and consequently the most formidable, an indifference to religion itself ; and the Inquisition was not slow to perceive that such a feeling was far from being hostile to the office. Religious apathy, and infidelity, however deeply they may have tainted the minds of a community, have seldom subverted its ecclesiastical institutions ; nay, more, there is much less danger for the latter when surrounded by unbelief, than amid the proselytising and fiery spirit of a new sect. There is no enthusiasm in scepticism ; it argues, detracts, and sneers, but wants that consuming zeal by which fervent minds are impelled to overthrow not only the principles but the works of their opponents, or to perish in the attempt. Thus it happened in Spain, where those who recognised no religious principles what-

ever—that is, the majority of the Liberal party—were content to leave the Established Church in possession of its rights and immunities, while affecting to view with contempt its doctrines and ceremonies. In this state matters might probably have continued, had not Absolutism been so closely connected with the ancient faith of the country. Its firmest partizans were the priests who attempted to arrest its downfall before the rapid diffusion of constitutional principles, by the usual arguments of tyranny : none of these was so fit for their purpose as the Inquisition, with its widespread system of espionage, its secret denunciations, its midnight arrests and dark tribunals. It furnished a machinery of terror, which was accordingly set in motion for the suppression of Liberalism ; and by the relentless severity of its proceedings, proclaimed both the fears and the policy of the ruling powers. From that moment its fate was decided, and on the next convulsion in this agitated country it sank to rise no more, the object of abhorrence to all but the fiercest supporters of absolute authority.

Secret denunciations I have mentioned as forming a part of the system by which the Inquisition swept victims into its dungeons. The mode it adopted was similar in principle, though not in practice, to that of the lion's mouth at Venice, and permitted individuals to prefer accusations against those whom they were willing to impeach and betray. The names of the accusers were never suffered by the Holy Office to transpire, but if it deemed their representations worthy of notice, a visit from its familiars was sure to startle the denounced at some moment when he least expected it, and perhaps be followed by his conveyance to one of its numerous cells. Such a system, by the suspicion



and distrust it inspired, was well calculated to repress every expression of opinion, while, at the same time, it invited the selfish or weak to purchase favour for themselves by becoming the denouncers of their friends. Many anecdotes are current in Spain with regard to individuals being betrayed by those on whom they reposed implicit confidence; but I shall only relate one which I heard from the lips of a party who was thus denounced, and in consequence subjected to a visit from the Inquisition.

During the reign of Fernando Septimo, the Absolutist faction for a time enjoyed an ascendancy which it did not fail to support by the terrors of the Holy Office. At that time the leaders of the constitutional party were under proscription, and had no other resource than to become refugees on foreign shores; from whence, however, they did not cease to carry on their schemes for restoring liberty to their country. One of these plans was to establish in England a periodical, to be written in the Spanish language, and in support of Liberal principles; from thence it was to be secretly disseminated through Spain. Such was a project seriously entertained by some of the refugees in London; one of whom, more zealous than discreet, transmitted a prospectus of it to an English merchant then resident in Seville. Our countryman received the paper, and was so far from attaching importance to its contents, or from imagining it involved himself in the schemes of the expatriated Liberals, that he showed it to a friend who happened to enter the room just as he had finished its perusal. In this, however, he was mistaken; the following morning, at an early hour, his dwelling was entered by the officers of the Inquisition, who demanded the document to which I have alluded. Having readily surrendered

it, he was then subjected to a series of interrogatories, all of which seemed to be put under the impression that he was the agent of some formidable conspiracy, organised against the government by the constitutional exiles in London. His statements, however, as to the possession of the document and upon other points, were so probable and consistent, that suspicion could find nothing to seize upon ; and after a lengthened examination the functionaries departed, leaving him in no slight astonishment regarding the cause of their visit. It is unnecessary to add, that nothing was further from his thoughts than to suspect his friend of being concerned with it. Time, however, at length threw light upon the affair, while at the same time it brought him his revenge. The downfall of the Absolutist party took place, and was followed by riots which invariably were directed against the detested prisons of the Inquisition. That of Seville, which I have described, was broken into, its prisoners liberated, and archives burnt. Among those who took a part in the work of destruction was a gentleman, who, on glancing at one of the manuscripts about to be destroyed, perceived that it related to our countryman, and accordingly rescued it from the flames. This was the act of denunciation that had subjected his dwelling to a visit from the Inquisition; and, on its being brought to him for perusal, he recognised the handwriting as being that of the friend of whom I have made mention. His revenge on this occasion was as ample as could well be imagined. He invited the denouncer to breakfast, and when the repast was concluded placed before him the evidence of his baseness, without adding a single remark. The other was at once overwhelmed with shame and confusion ; and knowing that neither excuse nor apology could be urged, quitted the room



in silence, with feelings which no man would envy, added to the conviction that from that day he would be known to the world as a spy of the hated Inquisition.

Subsequently, on my visiting Granada, I was favoured by a Spanish friend there with the perusal of a document which had once formed part of the archives of the Inquisition. The reader may imagine the feelings with which I proceeded to the examination of its contents, from which I anticipated some insight into the arcana of the Holy Office, or perhaps a narrative of dreary persecution and unknown martyrdom. To a certain extent these expectations were disappointed, though the volume was not without its interest, being connected with a breach of religious vows, and unfolding the spirit in which the Office dealt with ecclesiastical offenders. The manuscript, which consisted of rather more than twenty pages, recorded the trial and sentence of a padre guardian, or spiritual adviser to a convent of nuns. Of his offence, it will suffice to say that it involved an unprincipled abuse of his confidential position, and proclaimed the frailty of two of the sisters. The process was conducted after the usual style of the tribunal; no witnesses examined, or proof sought, but every circumstance of guilt elicited by interrogatories addressed to the culprits, and more particularly to the feminine portion of them. By such means the truth was wrung from their lips, together with many details that seemed to be unnecessarily inquired into; and the whole was wound up with the confession and penitent avowals of the arch-culprit himself. Such as they were, the tribunal deemed them of sufficient weight to influence its sentence, which, compared with the magnitude of the offence, will strike the reader as being singularly disproportionate. For three weeks he was to recite, morning and evening, a

couple of prayers designed for such offenders, to be followed by the same number of paternosters. That done, the holy father had expiated his immoralities, and satisfied the justice of his church. What would have been his sentence had he rejected the errors of Romanism, and preached the pure truths of the gospel? In vain would a blameless life have pleaded against an imprisonment of years, rendered unspeakably painful by the various modes which the Holy Office employed to crush the spirit and fortitude of the solitary sufferer.

## CHAPTER VI.

LEAVE SEVILLE FOR MOGUER.—ESCASENA DEL CAMPO.—IMPRISONMENT THERE.—TEXADA.—THE CONTRABANDISTA.—NIEBLA.—ITS RUINOUS STATE.—EL CONVENTO DE LA LUZ.—ITS PROPRIETORS.

IF the reader takes up the map of Spain and casts a glance upon that portion which lies between Seville and the frontiers of Portugal, he will behold a tract of country level as it borders the coast, but broken into mountains and valleys as it recedes inland. As my eye rested upon the dark shade indicating a region of stern peaks, frowning precipices, and lonely mountain paths, I felt rising strong within me all my attachment for such scenery: "The Sierra, the Sierra!" I mentally exclaimed, and burned with impatience to listen once more to the muleteer's song, and with him breast the mountain side. The arrangements for that purpose were soon completed, and I started on a beautiful May morning for Moguer, a town not far from the boundary line between the two kingdoms, and situated at the point where the Rio Tinto becomes navigable. Crossing the Guadalquivir by an ancient bridge of boats, we took our way through the suburb of Triana, followed by the curious eyes of such as were astir among the gipsy horde that form its population. These sons of Egypt have abandoned for a residence here, the wandering habits but not the evil propensities

of their race ; and Triana is notorious as the abode of robbers and desperate characters. When the cholera swept through Spain, no place suffered so severely as this ; fourteen thousand of its inhabitants were said to have been smitten by the pestilence, without however causing any visible diminution in their number. From the heights beyond there is a fine view of Seville and the adjacent country. While we were slowly climbing the steep acclivity, I turned to take a last look at the ancient metropolis of Andalucia. Even in its decay, though forsaken by commerce and industry, the old city bore itself with some of the pride of the haughty hidalgos who once filled it ; and, strong in its monuments of former greatness, seemed superior to misfortune. From its white walls extends a vast plain exceeded by none in fertility, and watered by a navigable river ; a combination of advantages which ought to make, and did make it for a time, the most flourishing of towns in the southern provinces. But all these, by the blindness of its rulers, have been rendered unavailing. The golden harvests of Mexico and Peru were preferred to the more solid though less dazzling fruits of agriculture ; monopolies sprang up under a false system of political economy ; impolitic restrictions were enforced, till at length the productive industry of the country was checked, and old age came on before its time. There is yet hope, however, for Seville ; the springs of its resources are not dried up, but only repressed. A wise and enlightened administration would work like a charm upon the country ; let it but foster the gifts of which nature has been everywhere so bountiful, and cease to postpone these to the ambition of becoming a manufacturing nation, then might return the golden days of Spain ; but when

did experience ever warn the rulers of this strange people, or instruct the people themselves?

At San Lucar la Mayor I stopped to dine at the posada, which may be taken as a specimen of the inns throughout Andalucia, and the entertainment there as that to be usually expected by the traveller. Entering what would be considered in England a pothouse of the commonest order, I found the mistress serving in the only apartment it contained for public accommodation; in one corner two men were playing at cards, and, as usual, seasoning their diversion with disgusting oaths and exclamations.

“What have you to give me to eat?”

“Eggs.”

“Nothing more?”

“Yes; bacalao (stockfish) but dry.”

“And what else?”

“That,” said the hostess, pointing to some very lean sausages hanging from the rafters.

“That will not do.” So with eggs and bread and some wine I made a tolerable dinner. My knife was the navaja, so dangerous in the hand of the intoxicated or infuriated peasant; it is a clasp-knife usually four or five inches long, the blade being broad in the middle and tapering to a fine point; with this he cuts his bread, peels his orange, and, when necessary, lays open the side or deals a gash upon the face of his antagonist. Afternoon came ere I had reached the small village of Escasena del Campo, the limit of my first day's journey. In the inn no apartment was to be found fit for “gente decente,” but I was directed to the cottage of an old woman who had apartments to let to strangers. It was necessary, however, to obtain permission for this purpose from the alcalde; and as that high dig-



nitary was enjoying his siesta, and could not then attend to affairs of state, I had to encounter some delay. After waiting for an hour, I was at length admitted to the shelter afforded by four tottering walls, and a roof through which daylight was visible in a score of places. My hostess was a very fluent speaker; or rather questioner, and quite took away my breath by the rapidity with which her queries followed one another. In ten minutes she had extracted from me a short account of my history, and my reasons for travelling. To all this I submitted with a good grace, for I knew my time was coming. Seizing an opportunity, I inquired after the health of one of the residents in the village. Then came two or three interrogatories regarding the welfare of some other individuals whom I named, to which she replied with rising curiosity at the extent of my information; and at length I concluded by asking, "How is Don Francisco T——?" At this last inquiry she arose quickly from her seat, and shading her eyes with her hand, peered curiously in my face.

"Ave Maria!" she cried; "you are the Englishman who was imprisoned here."

"The same, O grandmother," I replied.

To explain this allusion, it will be necessary to entreat the reader's patience for a moment. Two years previously, in company with C—— and a Spanish friend who was about to visit a relative in the vicinity, we reached this village late at night, and not a little fatigued. It was not till we were nearly driven to despair that, after a long search in the village, and in another a quarter of a mile distant, we obtained the shelter of the roof under which I was then sitting. This secured, our next thought was to cook some eggs that

had fortunately fallen in our way. C—— had managed to procure a frying-pan, and was absorbed in the interesting process of frying them, while I was blowing into a flame a few twigs that made up our fire, when a noise at the door turned our attention thither. To our surprise, the doorway was filled with dark figures; beneath their cloaks were plainly visible the points of drawn swords. One of the group then advanced into the middle of the room, and politely addressing us, requested to see our passports.

"Passports!" we both exclaimed in a breath. "Why, we have left them in Seville."

"Who are you?" was next inquired.

"We are Englishmen, who, intending only to spend a day or two here, did not think it necessary to bring our passports from Seville, to which we intend to return."

This reply did not seem satisfactory to our questioner. He consulted with the armed force in the rear, which, during this dialogue, had pounced upon our double-barreled guns. After a brief consultation, he informed us, as the result of their deliberations, that our presence was required in the council-chamber of the village. Remonstrances were vain, and so, escorted by the band already mentioned, we marched to the hall of justice, where we underwent a long string of interrogatories regarding our objects in coming to the village. Our papers and letters were demanded and given up: among these came to light the letter of introduction in the possession of our Spanish friend, who, by the way, was as negligent as ourselves; and everything plainly showed that we were merely peaceful travellers, and no emissaries of the "factious," as our interrogators were inclined to suppose. Some further con-

sultation then took place among our captors, and at length it was announced to us that we should be detained in custody until the gentleman to whom the letter of introduction was addressed came forward to be responsible for our good behaviour, or the English consul at Seville was communicated with. Loud was our indignation at this treatment; but resistance, of course, was unavailing.

There being no regular prison, we were borne off to a place which was used as the village granary, and ushered into a dismal and spacious barn. As far as we could judge by the light of a solitary lamp, it was devoid of windows, and altogether no bad substitute for a prison. A mattress was next dragged in, a blanket or two thrown upon it, the door locked and barred outside, and we were left to our meditations. What those of my companions in captivity were I do not know, but I was too tired and sleepy to feel very acutely the loss of my liberty; and so it happened that when, next morning, it was notified that we were free to depart, our friend's friend having engaged to answer for our respectability, I did not fall into ecstasies of joy, but walked out as quietly as if our quarters had been an hotel, and not a place of durance.

This incident was the commencement of my acquaintance with Don Francisco T——, by whom, as alcalde of the village, our arrest and incarceration were effected in person. The good alcalde, I believe, on further consideration, was inclined to think he had been somewhat over strict in the discharge of his duties. With the natural good feeling, therefore, of an honest heart, he endeavoured, by the abundance of his good offices and the profuseness of his hospitality, to banish from our minds any soreness that might have arisen on



that account. On the present occasion his reception of me was that of an old friend; he insisted upon my leaving my lodgings and taking up my abode under his roof; which on the following morning I did, and remained there during the few days I spent in the village. Don Francisco was a wealthy farmer, and no bad specimen of his class. Simple and unassuming in his manners, perhaps even retiring, his ability in the matters of agriculture had made him what he was; in other respects his information did not extend beyond that of the generality of his countrymen, but he was superior to them in being free from most of the narrow prejudices that warp their minds. I used to contrast him favourably with two farmers from the vicinity of Ronda, who spent a month in a "casa de pupilos" at which I happened to be staying. These men, whatever was the purpose that brought them there, were for the period of their stay almost immovable fixtures in the public room of the house. From breakfast till dinner time, they sat facing each other at the brazier filled with charcoal, by which the room was heated; hats on head, and wrapped in their long cloaks, moodily smoking paper cigars, and seldom exchanging a word with each other, or with any one around. I only saw them smile once, and that was at some piece of gross buffoonery perpetrated by one of the attendants. As regards myself, many words did not pass between us: such as they were, they conveyed to me the information that my country had always been the worst enemy of Spain, had risen only by her downfall, and was fomenting the present civil war for purposes of her own advantage; or, if that was not the subject of their discourse, it was to assure me that England was fast sinking among nations, had passed her prime, and

would, in her turn, be the prey of those whom she had so long plundered.

One trait in the character of Don Francisco pleased me more than any other, because now becoming rare in Spain. It was his old Spanish reverence for the religion of his fathers, and the display of a devotional feeling—to me the more striking, as I had witnessed it nowhere among the population of the towns in which I had been a resident. Infidelity, and a total neglect of the outward forms of the national faith, are there united with the adoption of the Liberal principles of which they are the strongholds. Whenever the word “Dios” occurred in our conversation, he reverentially lifted his hat from his head; and at the “oracion” the whole family joined with him in repeating aloud the prayers set apart for that occasion. When they were concluded, his children came, each in its turn, to kiss his hand; while to myself, and the others who happened to be in the room, they added, “Beso las manos a usted.” After dinner, on the first day of my being an inmate of his house, I expressed a determination to visit Texada, once a Roman city but now in ruins, and distant a league from the village. To go on foot, as I wished to do, appeared to my host and hostess a most unbecoming thing for a caballero, and both endeavoured to dissuade from the attempt, which they besides evidently considered as something beyond human strength to accomplish. However, they yielded at last to my wishes, and provided me with a guide. The village itself, I may mention, lay on the brow of a declivity that rapidly sank into a level plain, now green with the crops of the year; on the right, at the distance of twelve miles, were seen the white buildings of San Lucar la Mayor, through which I had passed; and right in front, the



blue outlines of a spur of the Sierra Morena closed the prospect. Midway between the slope upon which I stood and a corresponding one that rose out of the plain some two leagues distant, was an elevation, which, if not really artificial, was wondrously fashioned by nature's hand into the proportions of a circular mound; this was Texada, the "plaza," or fortress, as my guide called it. In ancient warfare it must have been a place of some strength; the remains of Moorish walls encircle the brow of the eminence: these were constructed, not of stone or brick, but of a kind of concrete formed of gravel and cement, and so durable and tough as to present a stubborn resistance to the assaults of time and hostile weapons. The process by which they were raised to the required height deserves explanation. The material, when hot, was spread on the wall to the depth of two or three feet; but as it was in a liquid state, wooden boxes were used to confine it, until by cooling it had acquired sufficient solidity to maintain an upright form and bear the weight of succeeding layers. In many places, both on the interior and exterior of the walls, the apertures were visible in which was inserted the framework of the scaffolding necessary for this purpose: it would appear that the builders had not thought it worth their while to fill them up; and indeed so fresh and recent was the aspect of many portions of their handiwork, that it was not difficult to imagine that the workmen had only that morning quitted the scene of their labours. On the summit, some dilapidated farm-offices are the sole representatives of the streets and edifices it once contained; but on the western side, at the foot of the ascent, are to be seen the foundations of baths, in the waters of which Romans and Moors had probably refreshed themselves. According to

Rodrigo Cearo, the decay of the place was caused by the insalubrity of the situation, the inhabitants deserting it on that account for Escasena and Paterna del Campo.

As we returned, my guide paused at a fountain, whose waters flowed into a watering-trough for cattle. Above the jet was the following inscription: "Nuestra Señora de la Luna, Patrona de Escasena, que se ve en el convento de los Padres Carmelitos Calzados, ha parecido en el termino de esta villa." (Our Lady of the Moon, Patroness of Escasena, who is to be seen in the convent of the Carmelite Fathers, has appeared within the boundaries of this township). Respecting the image thus stated to be in the holy keeping of the Carmelite Fathers, my guide gravely related the following tradition:—

"A charcoal burner was plying his occupation in a neighbouring wood, felling and uprooting trees, when in a lonely spot he discovered a muñeca, or image of the Virgin. This he placed in his sack, and carrying it home, proceeded to impart the news to his family. 'Vaya!' said he, 'I have found a curiosity!' and forthwith opened his bag to display it to them: to his surprise, no image was there. The next day he returned to his work: judge of his amazement when he espied the missing image in the very spot where he had originally found it. A second time he deposited the muñeca in his bag, and to make all sure, he secured the mouth of it, Señor, in this way: he fastened it with twenty knots and more, and immediately sallied homewards to relate the wonderful intelligence. Upon reaching his hut, the bag was opened; but wonderful to tell, in spite of all his precautions, the image had again escaped. A third time, then, he went in search, and found it reposing in its old quarters, as if no mortal

hand had ever profaned it; and so it was evident that Our Lady had appeared under the form of the image, and a chapel was consequently erected on the spot where the apparition took place."

Seeing that I listened to this miraculous history without betraying any signs of incredulity, my guide was encouraged to continue:—"Pues, Señor, there happened here another thing equally curious. A farmer took a print of the Virgin, and placed it in the open field under some clay; and for all the rain that fell, not a drop wetted it, and it was seen by many of the pueblo to be as dry as when he first placed it there."

"Possibly he had covered it up so close with the clay that no water could penetrate," was the suggestion of my unbelief.

"No, Señor, he covered it up very loosely indeed: and more than that—his wheat escaped, while that of his neighbours was utterly ruined by the blight."

In the evening came an invitation to Don Francisco and myself, to celebrate the opening of an escribania, or attorney's office, in the village. It came to pass, therefore, that next day, in our holiday attire, we made our way to the scrivener's residence, at the door of which a large party of the guests was grouped. Our entertainer, who was a short man with one eye, ushered us into the sala or principal room of the house, where preparations had been made for the festival. On the centre was a table loaded with sweetmeats, flanked by bottles of liqueurs of all colours. After waiting until all were assembled, our host in person proceeded to distribute the eatables around. First came merengues, then liqueurs, next mostachones and biscochos of various kinds, panales or sugar plums, which the water-sellers give along with a glass of water; these were



handed round in rapid succession, and washed down with glasses of wine, liqueurs, or the aguardiente of the country. On returning home we were joined by two of the guests, to whom I was introduced by Don Francisco, there being some sort of relationship between them. They entered with us, and after sitting a short time, each rose up in his turn, and, bowing low, placed his house at my disposal. This, I was well aware, was the Spanish method of conferring on a stranger the privileges of friendship; and I rose therefore in my turn, and expressed in suitable terms my gratitude for the honour done me. Furthermore to cement the friendship, I visited them that same evening—which indeed it was absolutely necessary I should do, according to the laws of Spanish etiquette—and submitted to the usual interrogatories that pass between confidential associates. My age, the number of my family, my religious belief, my wedded or unwedded state, and various other particulars, were all made the subject of inquiries, and freely commented upon by the good people, as if I had been some specimen of the animal kingdom just caught, and whose peculiar properties it behoved them to investigate and discuss: yet, withal, there was so much simplicity in their queries and discussions, that I could not help entering into the spirit of the thing, and was soon quite at home in acting the part of showman to myself. In the evening it was determined to have a dance. Some time previously a Portuguese dancing-master had found his way to the village, and since his appearance nothing was in fashion but quadrilles, mazurkas, and escocesas. Alas for the Fandangos, the Boleros, the Zapateadas, and other dances of the people! they had in consequence been voted ungenteel, and fit only for the corral, and

the swarthy dancers who wind their arms to the lively rattle of the castanets. The assembly room, when we reached it, was lighted up, and filled with the dark-eyed belles of the village, to whose numbers, I regretted to see, those of the male sex bore no proportion. All exerted themselves, however, to do justice to their instructor—doing their steps, as it is called, with praiseworthy minuteness. Some treacherous memories, however, occasionally murdered “L’Eté” and “Trenise;” and as this invariably brought us to a stand-still, the doctor was appointed by acclamation fogleman: for the remainder of the evening his duty consisted in bawling out “Ladies’ chain,” “Advance and retire,” “Turn your partners,” and so forth. It was late before we parted, the concluding scene being a *pas de deux*, performed by my host’s young daughters.

Next morning, the guide whom I had engaged made his appearance; and, after swallowing a hasty breakfast, I prepared to depart—the pressing entreaties of my host and hostess notwithstanding, whose kindness appeared to increase with every moment of my stay. They were very desirous I should remain a few days longer, to witness a fair that was to be held in the neighbourhood; but I did not feel at liberty to trespass on their hospitality any longer, and with reiterated thanks, and under an express promise to renew my visit should I return to Seville, I bade them farewell. Out of the village our route led down one of those bridle paths so characteristic of the country. From the wearing effects of the constant passage of vehicles, added to the fury of the winter rains, the path in time sinks as it were into the soil, and becomes in truth a ditch just broad enough to permit the movement of a cart. Creeping shrubs hung from the walls of this singular road, and



caught our hats and cloaks as we wound along without catching a glimpse of aught but the sky overhead. At length we descended to a plain that bore all the signs of industrious cultivation. Large fields of maize yet green, and of wheat ready for the sickle, spread away to the left; while beyond them rose the spires of Manzanilla, the town itself being hidden from view by dark olive-woods: on the right extended a wide common browsed on by numerous herds of cattle. Altogether it was a prospect that might well make glad the heart of the owner, with its assurances of golden gains and of labour well rewarded; but it wanted the charm of variety, and the eye soon grew tired of meeting field after field of waving grain. My guide in the mean time was by no means disposed to let the hours pass in silence, and before we had traversed a league was enjoying a complete monopoly of the conversation. Juanito was above the middle height, of a spare and wiry frame, seldom smiled, and spoke and thought like a man who had seen something of the world. His adventures had been somewhat of a varied kind, and were more or less connected with the systematic infraction of his country's laws; but this did not lower him in the estimation of his friends or the public, and for myself I confess my feelings rather inclined to him for the same reasons: in a word, he either was or had been a contrabandista. One incident in his history is worth telling. On one occasion, when engaged with some confederates in a "smuggling lay" near Malaga, he had the misfortune to be captured by a Columbian cruiser, by which he and his fellow contrabandistas were carried to Gibraltar. Here they were confined for some time in the hold of the vessel, closely watched, and with a very scanty allowance of food.

To make matters worse, each day it became less and less, till at length it ceased altogether, and for three days they suffered all the agonies of hunger. In despair, a plan was concerted in order to reach the shore, and make known to the authorities the horrible privations they suffered. As they were allowed to ascend to the deck, but only four at a time, it was agreed that of those who could swim, that number should attempt to reach the shore. This was accordingly done. The little party suddenly throwing of their cloaks, plunged into the sea and made for the land; and in spite of the boats which were instantly sent in pursuit, contrived to reach it in safety. On the case being made known to the governor, orders were despatched to the Columbian vessel for the immediate liberation of the captives. "And thus, you see," concluded Juanito, "I am indebted to your countrymen for my liberty, and perhaps my life; for it was the intention of our captors to carry us to Columbia, though it is but too probable we should have perished by the way, from the barbarity of our treatment." His last expedition was undertaken in company with a party of contrabandistas, who were summoned to aid, and if need be to defend by the strong hand, the unloading of a vessel which was despatched from Gibraltar with a rich cargo of tobacco. When assembled, their numbers, the reader will be surprised to learn, amounted to 250 men, all well armed with escopetas, many of them with two. Upon approaching the spot where the landing was to be effected, which was somewhere within the frontiers of Portugal, they were met by another band of 150 under a different command, and in conjunction proceeded to their destination. It may be conceived that the passage of so large a force of armed men through the country

did not fail to alarm the Portuguese authorities, and a body of troops was despatched to disperse the daring party. Between these and the bold contrabandistas some skirmishing ensued, and one or two of the latter were wounded; but as the vessel they expected did not make her appearance, it was judged expedient to make no further resistance, and they accordingly separated without accomplishing their object. Each man had two horses, and received payment according to the sufficiency of his animals and the load they could carry: in general the agreement ranged from twelve to thirty dollars, subject to the stipulation, that if no cargo was discharged, the half only should be claimed.

What government, we may well ask, can ever hope to put down smuggling, when its subjects unite in such formidable numbers to maintain the traffic? A strong executive, aided by a combination of favourable circumstances, and a lavish expenditure of treasure, might, perhaps, undertake the task with some show of success; but it almost excites a smile to see attempted by the feeble and corrupt hands of Spain, the suppression of a system against which far more powerful nations have contended in vain. When we witness the wide extent of her frontier, and know, moreover, that her officials are scantily remunerated, and consequently open to temptation, we do not wonder at everywhere seeing such articles as English cottons, thread, stockings, muslins, and the like, which are excluded from introduction by duties amounting to a prohibition. Gibraltar is the emporium from whence the contraband cargoes are supplied; thus being, in peace as in war, a thorn in the side of Spain. The amount of our exports to the "Rock" sufficiently proves this. In 1844, their value

reached one million sterling, an amount which was infinitely beyond the consumption of the 12,000 dwellers there ; and which would certainly create surprise, did we not know that, either by connivance or open violence, three-fourths of it reached the interior. At the same time, it is curious to observe that our exports to Spain, officially declared, amounted to no more than 500,000*l.* in value. If we add to this a million and a half for what passes through Gibraltar, and by the frontiers of Portugal, upon the mules of the *contrabandista*, we shall form some notion of the real amount of our trade with the former country.

Our road led through two or three villages apparently crumbling into ruins. In these miserable spots, however, are frequently to be seen houses of a superior description, whose owners are gentlemen of property, and men of refined education. The cause of their existence amid such desolation is, as I have already stated, to be found in the general insecurity of life and property which pervades Spain. No man thinks of making a country-house his abode, but chooses the village or hamlet nearest to his property, and from thence sallies forth to superintend the operations of his dependents. For the same reasons, farm-houses are rare ; master and servant inhabit the same *pueblo*, and often have to travel a weary league or two before reaching the farm.

In one of these villages, not far from Escasena, my attention was struck by a mansion which might once have claimed to be the pride of the place ; but now, roofless and dismantled, its only distinction was to elevate its mouldering walls a little higher than its fellows in decay. The basement-story, I found, was converted into a yard for cattle ; and from that a staircase of beautiful white marble, though now sadly



fractured and mutilated, led to the upper rooms. The history attached to it was an every-day one: the founder had returned from Mexico laden with wealth, which purchased for him the title of marquis, and reared this edifice with its marble columns and costly decorations. His inheritor speedily dissipated the gains, probably ill-gotten, of his parent; and the third in succession now resides at La Isla in indigence and obscurity. His necessities had been such as to cause him to sell the very roof and flooring of this his paternal dwelling for the sake of the sum the wood might bring.

From a long way off the towers of Niebla had been visible, but at the slow pace of our steeds the distance between us seemed never to diminish. At length we reached the banks of the Rio Tinto; its dark waters, gushing over a rocky channel, conveyed an idea of refreshing coolness, in delightful contrast with the oppressive heat that loaded the atmosphere. Following the windings of the river for a short distance, we came to a spot where it was crossed by an ancient bridge of nine arches. Beyond this, to the left, rose the sun-burnt and crumbling walls of the town, crowning a slight eminence, at whose base still wound the river we had passed; while nearer the bridge the higher battlements of the castle overlooked and commanded the passage across. The road between the bridge and the town seemed to have been the work of the elements and time, rather than of the hand of man. We toiled up a steep path, paved by the rock which the winter torrents had laid bare, and fringed on either side by oleander bushes, whose rich bright blossoms were a welcome sight to eyes that ached from the glare and reflection of the sun upon dusty paths. Huge masses of rock intercepted our progress at every step, and



covered the declivity beside and below us; others had held their downward way to the bed of the stream, where their site was marked by the foam that broke over them.

On coming abreast of the walls of the town, Juanito turned off and led the way to a posada just fronting the gate, where he proposed halting for our midday repast. The aspect of this place of entertainment for man and beast was anything but cheering to a way-worn traveler. Stretched on their mantas about the entrance lay half-a-dozen muleteers, enjoying their siesta during the heat of the day. No one concerned himself in the least degree about us, nor indeed did an eye unclose, though the clatter of our steeds as we led them over the flinty pavement of the dwelling might have been heard in the farthest corner; and I was looking in vain for the master of the establishment among the recumbent forms around me, when my attendant, who was better versed in the ways of the place, walked up to a very stout woman reclining sleepily on one of the low chairs of the country, and inquired if they had any barley for his animal. A shake of the head intimated there was none, and spared our hostess, for such she was, the trouble of opening her lips. To have inquired for provisions of any description would only have elicited a stare of astonishment at our want of forethought, and we therefore sat down to the scanty store we had brought along with us. Our repast did not detain us long; and not being in the mood to abide longer than was needful in this mansion of Morpheus, I sallied forth, accompanied by Juanito, for a ramble through the town.

Entering by the gate on the eastern side, under an archway of Moorish architecture, we passed at once into the midst of ruins and desolation. It was a

melancholy sight to witness, and I involuntarily turned to a crumbling staircase that conducted to the summit of the walls, thinking that I might descry some quarter from which the life had not departed so utterly as it had from this scene of solitude and decay. Still it was everywhere the same; there were whole streets of houses of which nothing but the walls remained standing, and which now resembled long rows of skeletons clinging together for support; the whole seemed ready to sink into the ground before the first blast that swept over the fortifications to touch with its wing the long grass that grew upon hundreds of hearthstones and thresholds.

Had all this been wrought by the elements, or by war, or any one of those catastrophes that suddenly overthrow the work of years, one could have looked upon it with pity and regret, yet not without hopes of returning prosperity; but a worse agent than these had made the town the wreck it was, and more fatally assailed its future prospects. Its ruin was the fruit of that national decay, the traces of which cross the observer's path wherever he wanders. Living Spain is no more; her industry and energy are but the languid efforts of old age; her vitality circulates feebly through a frame which once revelled deep in avarice, injustice, ignorance, and superstition, and for the sake of these stretched itself under the blighting shadow of misgovernment and corruption: she drags on her existence painfully and laboriously; and as the extremities are the first to grow torpid, so has this remote town been the first to share in her failing strength, and exhibit the earliest tokens of dissolution.

Meanwhile, I clambered along the battlements: sometimes slipping among the long grass that waved

over them, or stepping cautiously on tottering towers that had erst borne unmoved the tread of the Moorish sentinel, I came to an angle that commanded a fine view of the valley through which the river wound towards the sea. A little further on, a yawning breach opposed my advance ; and I descended to *terra firma*, where the view was confined to wretched cabins harbouring a population of dark-skinned women and half-naked children. The town, like Palos and Moguer, is said to be peopled by the descendants of the slaves, whom the conquerors of the New World brought back with them as the spoils of the sword ; and certainly the present inhabitants resemble Mulattoes much more than Europeans : but in the want of positive evidence for this fact, it is just as likely that their darker hue arises from a stronger infusion than usual of Moorish blood. Of the few we met, one was a little urchin of five or six years, who, divested of everything but nature's garb—*en cuero* as they call it in Spain—came sauntering down the street with the air of a Bond-street loungeur. He paused when his eye caught us, and, folding his little arms, turned round and honoured me with a stare that would have done credit to an exquisite. I presume his survey was satisfactory, for, nodding his little head in approval, he marched on and left us.

On the way to the town, and while wandering through its silent streets, Juanito, in proof of the ancient riches of the place, had more than once launched out into glowing descriptions of treasures of gold, and I know not what else, that had lately been dug up within the walls. Tales of this kind are so frequent in the mouths of the vulgar in Spain, that I seldom paid any attention to them ; but I know not what whim induced

me now to consider his account as highly probable. The thought struck me just as I stood before a dwelling that bore evident traces of having been a portion of the ancient fortifications; and, as a beginning must be made somewhere, What place, thought I, so likely as this, to know something of the buried wealth of its former masters? The "Dios guarde à usted" of Juanito was responded to by the customary "Pase usted adelante." Crossing the threshold, I found myself under a kind of dome, into which the light was admitted by an aperture in the top; the only inmate was a woman, who desisted from spinning while she replied to my inquiries. I was directed to go to the house of "Antonio el coxo," the way to which she described with a minuteness that left me quite bewildered on her concluding; but, luckily, Juanito was more acute, and without much difficulty piloted the way to the mansion of "Antonio the cripple." "Quien es?" was the answer to the knock of Juanito, who by this time was full of enthusiasm for the cause of antiquarian research, and thundered at the door as if it was a matter of life and death that brought us there. "Gente de paz" (people of peace), we rejoined; and thus re-assured, a wicket in the door was opened—or, more accurately, just enough of it to permit the swarthy spouse of Antonio to reconnoitre the persons whose impatient summons had nearly demolished the frail bolts.

The information we received was very unsatisfactory; the lord of the house was absent on a journey, and, moreover, had bestowed his treasures upon a friend in Moguer. As a last hope, I inquired if any other virtuoso was to be found in the place; and, considering for a moment, our dark friend replied that most probably the cura might possess some ancient coins and



other relics of the past. To the habitation of the cura I therefore wended my way, and halted before a dwelling whose exterior wore a more respectable air than any I had hitherto seen. The doors were closed, betokening that its inmates had not yet shaken off their siesta ; my watch, however, told me that, by the customs of the land, the drowsy god should have abdicated half-an-hour before ; and curas, I thought, should not set an example of sloth to their flocks. So these reasons directed my hand to the knocker ; and, the servant being informed as to the purport of my visit, I was ushered into the antesala. In a few moments the cura made his appearance, and in reply to my question related, that some peasants, while working in a field belonging to him, had discovered, close to the river's edge, a large jar : upon breaking open this, there was displayed to view a multitude of Moorish coins, the whole of which were silver. The quantity was calculated to exceed in weight an arroba, or measure of twenty-five pounds. As almost invariably happens, the finders were unable to part the booty in peace, so that the circumstance became known to the authorities, who claimed the whole ; and as the land in which it was found was his property, he became entitled to a portion, which he received. Of these he showed me a few, and very frankly presented me with one. It was of the usual shape of Moorish coins, being square, and stamped with Arabic characters, and in a state of perfect preservation. With many thanks I bade adieu to the kind and courteous cura—who, like almost all those of his profession I subsequently encountered, was a gentleman in his bearing and manners—and in a few moments was on the road to Moguer.

Winding round the northern side of the fortifica-



tions by a rocky path, I descended into the valley of the Rio Tinto, and followed the course of the "dark river," for such its name imports, amid rich fields of wheat and barley: intermingled with these were green and luxuriant vineyards, while villages and spires upon the slopes gave life and animation to the scenery. Half a league beyond Lucena, we turned up the acclivity on our right to reach a convent, whose towers, and tall cypresses rising on its brow, form a conspicuous object to wayfarers in the hollow of the valley. The conventual buildings I found undergoing a metamorphosis little imagined by the pious founder; workmen were busily engaged in converting them into a country mansion; and on all sides cells and oratories were shaking off their monkish repose, and waking to the noise of the implements by which they were transformed into bedrooms and salas. To my regret I learnt that the proprietor and his lady had taken their departure eight days previously; but I received a cordial welcome from the superintendent of the works, to whom I was recommended by a letter from the señora. In other days, Padre Alonzo, as he was still called, had ruled the temporal affairs of the brotherhood of which he was a member; he had, however, lived to see his brethren expelled from their home, their possessions confiscated, and the scanty pittance accorded them as an equivalent cruelly withheld, by a government that broke its faith as soon as plighted, and cared as little for their want and wretchedness as it did for its own credit and honour. Let me not, however, be understood as wishing to bespeak sympathy for monastic institutions: here, as everywhere else, their existence was the bane of the country; and so generally admitted was this by Spaniards of all shades of opinion, that had Don Carlos

ascended the throne of Spain, the most strenuous resistance to their restoration, would have been offered by his own followers, to whom, with the exception of the priestly advisers, they were as odious as to the Liberal party.

From the great size of the convent, it must have been the property of a numerous as well as wealthy community. There were three cloisters, all communicating with each other: the first into which the padre conducted me was small, but the next was spacious and well designed. In one chamber was piled a confused heap of ponderous tomes, part of the library of the brotherhood, and evidently regarded as useless lumber, which it would be a charity to take away. Apparently the worthy padre bore no great love to them, for he pressed me to consider as mine sundry volumes I was inspecting with much interest: they were ancient editions of the Fathers, and would have been a treasure to a bibliomaniac; but black letter and vellum, though invested in my eyes with the veneration that belongs to antiquity, did not inspire me with the enthusiasm required to transport them over hill and dale for the next three or four months, and accordingly I civilly declined the padre's generous offer of his master's property. One volume, however, I possess, and it is one which, as a memorial of those whom I may never see again, I preserve with religious care. On my way to England, while the steamer was pausing for its despatches in the Bay of Cadiz, I received from the señora a Latin Bible, which she rightly judged would be more welcome to a Protestant than the rarest work of ancient lore in the convent library. The moth and worm had been busy with its pages, and on the last one some hand had borne record that its teachings

had been in vain against the canker of disappointed hopes. Even in the cell there was the spirit which could write—

Ya es la esperanza perdida  
Y un solo bien me consuela  
Que el tiempo que pasa y vuela  
Llevará presto la vida.

As I passed through the convent gates, it would have been strange had I not wished that sorrow might never enter there: I had received too much kindness from its new masters to think of anything else at that moment. The history of the lady was, besides, peculiarly interesting. The daughter and co-heiress of a wealthy planter of the Havanna, in her early years she received the usual amount of instruction accorded to females there, and which was of a kind corresponding to the life of indolence and frivolity she was expected to lead. This, however, did not suit the tastes of Manuela G——, in whose mind the love of knowledge was deeply implanted. In the literature of her mother tongue there was little to slake her thirst for information, and she turned therefore to acquire the languages of Europe, and especially the English, as a key to that knowledge her own country could not afford. Difficulties and discouragements did not repress her spirit, manifold as these were under the planter's roof, where prejudices abound, and where the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake was considered a gratuitous folly; at length, by toilsome exertions she became a self-taught mistress of English, which she spoke with a purity and elegance I have seldom heard equalled.

In point of solid acquirements her progress was proportionally great; even in England, whose boast is in

the number of her well-read and intellectual women, her place would have been a high one. From the Havanna she repaired to Cadiz, having previously married the husband of her choice, an officer in the Spanish navy, and who to his ancient lineage added the frankness and openness of disposition that everywhere seem part of a sailor's nature. Her children were in England, receiving their education at a Protestant school; a step she had taken not without grave remonstrances from her friends, to whose minds, moulded in the spirit of modern liberality in Spain, the possession of no faith at all was far more pardonable than a leaning towards one adverse to the national creed. But her strong good sense taught her to think otherwise, even if there had been no reason to believe that in this matter she acted in accordance with convictions which were not exactly those of her forefathers. Such characters are rare anywhere, but in Spain they "dwell apart like stars."

The bells of Moguer were tolling the *animas* when we entered the town, after an hour spent in winding amid vineyards intermingled with fields of yellow wheat, and the remains of pine-woods, where were blooming a vast variety of flowers. Juanito led the way with confidence to the inn, where I deposited my valuables in the "*seguro*," and thence proceeded to present my letters of introduction.

## CHAPTER VII.

MOGUER.—THE PINZONS.—PALOS.—THE CONVENT OF LA RABIDA.  
 —ITS RUINOUS STATE.—PICNIC THERE.—ESCAPE OF PRISONERS.  
 —RIDE TO ZALAMEA.—VALVERDE.—COSTUME OF THE INHABITANTS.—HOLIDAY IN ZALAMEA.—RIO TINTO.—ITS MINES OF COPPER.—THE ANCIENT BÆTICA.—CAMPO FRIO.—THE TRAVELLED INNKEEPER.

THE first house to which I directed my steps was that of the Pinzons, the lineal descendants of Martin Alonzo Pinzon, the hardy mariner who was the first of his class to imbibe some of the enthusiasm of genius, and himself shared in the dangers that attended the search for an unknown world. In introducing this family to the reader, I trust I shall not be considered as violating the privacy of domestic life. As a general rule, there is no extenuation for those who heedlessly drag into their pages such individuals as they may meet with in the sacred boundary of the family circle; but something may be urged for the unwillingness of the world to lose sight of those who bear a name with which history is familiar: the children of those whom it has elevated to a niche in the temple of fame are in some measure its own, and by virtue of this tie must it claim an interest in their welfare, as well as the right to learn something of their fortunes. At all events, if I err, I do so in company with the amiable author of the *Chronicles of the Alhambra*. It was under the roof of the



Pinzons that I first read the narrative of his acquaintance with their family, and his sketch of its respective members, by whom, I may add, it was referred to with feelings of gratification and pride.

The member of the family to whom I bore an introduction was absent on a sporting expedition, from which he was expected to return that night: his mother, however, placed the house at my disposal, but I only begged the address of some casa de pupilos; and being fully instructed on this point, took my leave, with the promise to pay a formal visit on the morrow. Assisted by a mozo from the inn, I found the house; and climbing a narrow and tortuous staircase, made my way into an apartment that served as a kitchen, hall, and passage to other chambers. In this was seated the mistress, whose reception of my proposal to quarter myself under her roof amounted to a positive refusal, but after some expostulation I wrung an unwilling permission to remain. A mattress was dragged into a room whose musty smell and cobwebbed appearance bespoke the length of time it had been out of use; a couple of chairs were backed against the damp walls, and my habitation for the night was prepared. Comfortless as it was, I had expected something worse; and in this state of agreeable disappointment, betook myself to my couch, quite satisfied that a ride of ten hours would speedily drown in slumber every feeling of discomfort.

The next morning, while at breakfast, a young man of engaging exterior walked in, and announced himself as Don Ignacio Hernan de Pinzon. Many words had not passed between us before we had arranged a plan of operations for the day: the first part was to be dedicated to the contemplation of all the lions in the place; and the second part to commence with dinner at his

mother's, from whom he was the bearer of an invitation to that effect.

Moguer is situated on the brow of a ridge that bounds on the south the valley of the Rio Tinto, or Aciger; and may be described as an assemblage of a few long streets diverging from a common centre, rather than a compactly built town. With the exception of the principal church, which contains some ancient marble tombstones, upon which repose the sculptured effigies of knights in armour, and a tower built in imitation of the Giralda of Seville, there is little to attract a traveller's eye. Our survey of its public edifices was therefore speedily concluded, and to while away the time we entered the bodega, or wine storehouse, of a large proprietor, who, besides his possessions in vineyards, was one of the pillars of the church in Moguer. As I had seen the principal establishments of a similar kind in Port St. Mary's and Xeres, I was prepared to see nothing superior in this one, large and well filled as it would have been deemed by a stranger to the town. There was the usual display of portly butts, bearing on their shoulders, like so many Atlases, comrades as bulky as themselves; in corners men were drawing off from casks of fiery Catalan brandy the due proportion of alcohol, by means of which the pure juice of the grape is converted into that compound known to English palates as a full-bodied wine.

I confess, however, my surprise was great when the obliging padre, after introducing me to sundry casks of meaner note, inquired if I would like to taste St. Peter or St. Paul. In total darkness as to his meaning, I replied at random, "St. Paul;" and then made the discovery, that upon several of the largest tuns the padre had conferred the names of his favourite saints,

which were legibly painted thereon. It was an odd way of evincing veneration for a saint, but no more strange than the custom once prevalent in Spain when she possessed a navy, of christening her vessels of war—the ministers of devastation and bloodshed—with the titles of San José and Santissima Trinidad. About 3000 or 4000 butts of the wine from this district are annually shipped to Xeres, where they are consumed in the manufacture of sherry. It is principally in the composition of the inferior kinds they are used, and the flavour peculiar to the Moguer wine is very readily detected in the low-priced sherries that abound in the English market.

At dinner I met the whole family of the Pinzons, consisting of the señora, her daughter, two sons, Ignacio and Isidoro (the latter in the priesthood), and a son by a former marriage; these are all that survive; and as yet no member has been tempted by the chase of fortune to forsake the roof under which they live in harmony and brotherhood. In the evening we strolled along the brow of the valley, and looked down upon the scene that lay below. Here, when about to be lost in the sea, the Rio Tinto winds through an extensive flat, that on the opposite side rises into a gently swelling declivity. To the left was Huelva, built on the extremity of a ridge running parallel with the valley; below, almost at our feet, San Juan del Puerto; and more distant to the right, Triguerras. Retracing our steps homewards, a violent thunderstorm broke over our heads, and compelled us to take shelter in the nearest cottage, the sole inhabitants of which were an aged female and her daughter, a woman of middle age. As the loudest peal shook the cabin, it was followed by a shriek from the latter, who fell from her

seat and rolled in convulsions on the floor. In a short time, however, the fit passed away; but it was striking to hear the terms of affection and endearment lavished upon the unconscious daughter by her affrighted mother.

"Joy of my heart," she exclaimed, "will you not speak to me? Oh, daughter of my soul, one word! *Hija de mi alma*, I'm your mother, your mother."

In listening to these phrases, so Oriental in their character, we recognise how deeply the spirit of the East is seated in the nature of Spain: in phraseology, costume, manners, it is readily traced; and above all is it observable in that repugnance to change, so eminently the feature of nations that dwell near the rising sun. One might almost imagine that some secret link binds the fate and fortunes of Spain to those of the East. When the Ottoman Empire was thundering at the gates of Vienna, Western Europe was overshadowed by the might of Spain with the Indies. Both were then at the climax of their greatness, and both with equal steps approaching to the brink of that decay which since then has swallowed them up. And now, when the East is beginning to awake from the sleep of centuries, and to enter upon a new political existence, there are symptoms of a like movement in this land, so long in darkness. Separated by distance and position, the two are stirring feebly, as if it were by the same summons, and their steps are equally devious and uncertain; both have wandered into revolutions and bloodshed, and still evince a desire to tread that ensanguined path; and upon each has descended the sword with such a sweep, that it were hard to tell whether their past torpidity were not better than the exhaustion that has followed its stroke.



At an early hour next morning we were astir, in order to escape the heat of the sun, which during the middle of the day had now become oppressive; a long ride was before us, and our destination was Palos and the convent of La Rabida, names that play an important part in the struggling fortunes of Columbus. Accompanied by a gentleman who was an inmate of the same casa du pupilos, and by Don Ignacio, I set forth on the back of a white steed of ancient aspect: the saddle was made in imitation of an English turn-out, but furnished with stirrup-irons of dimensions so minute, that if more than the point of the toe was inserted therein, the boot was caught as if in a trap, and required to be disengaged by the hand. Don Ignacio bestrode his own Andalusian; the high peaks of his albarde were lost in a multitude of cloaks and mantas, in readiness for whatever storm might overtake us. The way to Palos lay through a country of varied though not striking beauty, relieved by occasional glimpses of the sea. One long street alone gave that place a claim to the title of town, or rather village; but such as it was, it lay snugly at the foot of a conical eminence, on whose summit rose the remains of ancient fortifications. Turning down a side street of two or three houses, we stopped before the door of one which is said to have been the habitation of Martin Alonzo, and is still occupied by a relative of the family. There was nothing to mark it, either without or within, as superior to the others; it was nothing more than the abode of a wine-grower, furnished with its due compliment of bodegas, wine-presses, and tinajas, together with its distilling and boiling apparatus.

The inhabitants of this town, like those of Niebla, are said to be descended from slaves introduced by the



adventurous mariners who resided here before removing to Moguer and other towns. Xeres de los Caballeros, a town of Estremadura, is also said to have been peopled by them; and there may be some foundation for this in the fact that Pizarro and Cortes, and the majority of their followers, were natives of that province. At all events, whatever be their origin, it is undeniable that a marked difference distinguishes the personal appearance of the inhabitants of Palos from that of their brother Andalucians. Their complexion is not swarthy, but partakes rather of a copper colour; the cast of their features is square and angular, and the hair crisp and coarse. Having taken the names of their masters, there are thus to be found here the noblest surnames in Spain, borne by a population which is little removed above want.

The convent of the Rabida is little more than half a league from the town: from a hacienda, or property belonging to my companion's family, could be descried its belfry, rising above the pines that cluster round and hide from view the main building. A more sequestered spot could scarcely be chosen, or one where the world could be sooner forgotten. In full view of the sea, it crowned the extremity of a ridge that pointed towards the west; and when regarded by the seamen from his passing bark, must rise conspicuously among the surrounding objects in the landscape. Whether by accident or design, everything was in keeping with its Arab name of Rabida, or the wilderness; pine-woods and wild shrubs closed in around the high walls; the paths that approached them were broken and rugged, and seemed to come from scenes of wilder desolation; every vestige of cultivation was excluded, as if it were feared that the sight of man's handiwork might recall the world to

bosoms which had abjured its ties. If there was any prospect open to the eye, it was that which showed the sea, and their fellow-men tempting its treacherous surface. The general aspect of the convent is that of an assemblage of high walls associated together without much regard to regularity or the rules of architecture. But the porch was an object of deeper interest than if it had been framed of the noblest proportions. Beneath its humble arch rested the discoverer of the New World, when, weary and way-worn, he begged a cup of water at the door. The conversation that ensued brought out the sympathies of a heart which was alive to the noble enthusiasm of genius; and when it ended, he must have felt that now, if ever, his star was ascending. What rising hopes must have smoothed his brow as he departed! and how light must have been his step beneath the gloomy pines that seemed to frown him away as he approached the door!

Passing forward, a cloister is entered, in which an inscription bears witness that it was repaired and restored in 1804; a vain memorial, for since the expulsion of the monks, and the confiscation of their convent by the government, there are no traces here but those of neglect and pillage. It was a scene of sordid destruction. Since the government had taken no care of it, the whole neighbourhood had assumed the right to remove and abstract whatever might repay their trouble, the very roofs were torn down, and the floors gone for the sake of the beams that supported the tiles; and even without that excuse the hand of wanton dilapidation was everywhere visible. On the right hand of the patio, facing the entrance, lies the way to the chapel, which is an edifice of modern construction. The choir was destroyed, and a marble slab at the foot of the

altar had been torn up by sacrilegious hands in the hope of finding treasure hidden beneath. Their act disclosed a vault, in which, probably, reposed the dust of the pious founder, before it was scattered by unhallowed curiosity, for on descending into it, and groping about, we laid our hands upon the mouldering fragments of a coffin. From the chapel we made our way into another cloister, and ascending a staircase, dangerous from the damage it had received, gained the corridors into which opened the cells of the monks. Among them is shown one in which Columbus is said to have slept, during his visits to the convent. If the tradition be true, then had the fathers consulted well the feelings of the wanderer.

Its windows look out upon the ocean—that wide ocean so full of mystery and dread to the common minds that understood him not, and a trackless waste to the contented knowledge of his day, but across which the daring eye of his genius beheld a path as straight and bright as that cast upon the waves by the sun sinking in the west. This must have been his chamber; and tradition must be right in appropriating the next one to his faithful and influential friend, Fray Juan Perez de Marchena. The floors of this, as well as of many cells adjoining, had vanished before the Vandalism of which we saw so many traces. Yet the perpetrators of it were only acquitting themselves as true Spaniards; they could be no legitimate descendants of the men who repaid Columbus with black ingratitude, and sent him to the grave in sorrow, if they did not now deface a spot his name had made memorable. The eyes of my companion filled with tears as he witnessed the scene of havoc. His interest in the place was deeper and nearer than mine; his ancestor had been the

comrade of Columbus; and, justly proud of that connexion, he felt all the more keenly the worse than slighting disregard his countrymen rendered to a place which was a striking page in the history of their great benefactor.

We mounted up to the belfry, and sitting down on the ridge of the roof, found a relief in looking upon the varied scenery the prospect embraced. Facing us, to the west, was the sea; on the left, all was shadowed by pine-woods and low copse; in the other direction, across the estuary of the Rio Tinto, the town of Huelva, covering the lower half of a declivity; and up the valley, the river winding its course amid fields of golden grain. The day, besides, was bright and fine, with a gentle air from the west; and having worked ourselves up into a passion down below, we were in a fit state to imbibe something of the spirit that western breeze had caught from the calm sea over which it floated towards us. By little and little we yielded to the feelings it inspired; and then, while surrounded by this peaceful scene, and canopied by a heaven of purest blue, it was passing pleasant to look upon river and sea, and forest and flower, basking in the sunshine, and enjoying, as it seemed, with quiet gladness the genial light of day.

Close to the convent, on the west, is a creek, called El Estero del Domingo Rubio. Tradition marks this as the final point of departure of Columbus's little squadron for an unknown world. This moment in his troubled career—the close of long years spent in patient yet courageous hope—one battle painfully won, and another lowering before him—a contest in which he beheld the elements ranged against him, along with men more intractable than they,—this mo-

ment, so full of new hopes and fears, has been seized by not a few of our painters, as a fit subject for the canvas, but without, as I thought, having rendered it sufficient justice ; so I proceeded to sketch a parting scene for myself. I anchored the trio of adventurous barks in the creek, and gave them a fair wind, for on their quaint high poops the scarlet-and-gold banner of Spain is fluttering seawards, and impatiently pointing the way to lands through which it is to be borne in triumph. The topsails are loosened, and the last preparations for departure complete ; but the decks are deserted by the crew—they are in the chapel of the convent, listening with emotions that stir each heart as it never felt before, to the last mass they shall perhaps hear celebrated on Christian ground. And now the concluding chaunt is over, and a procession of monks issues from the gates, and, bearing the host under a canopy, winds down to the ships, followed by the mariners and a crowd of weeping relatives. The crew ascend the sides of their vessels, and, leaning over the bulwarks, exchange silent adieus with the throng that lines the shore, who in their part mingle vows to our Lady of the Rabida with prayers for their safe return. One alone is wanting to complete their numbers ; it is a man short of stature and of slender proportions, whose lofty brow and dark thoughtful eye, together with the bronze of his complexion, give an expression of determination to his small and delicate features. It is Columbus, who has lingered behind to press once more the hand of the monk in whom, amid all difficulties, he found a true and constant friend. They part at length ; the commander issues his orders, the sails are swung round to meet the wind, and the expedition is begun.



Descending from our lofty perch, we again surveyed the cell of Columbus, and, scrambling by the broken staircase of which I have made mention down to the basement-story, were surprised to hear voices and loud laughter in the chapel, where lately all was silence. Peeping in, we discovered that the merriment proceeded from a party of young folks of both sexes, who had come across from Huelva to spend the day here. They had brought provisions with them, and were dispersed about the chapel, devouring their repast; some seated on the steps of the altar, others on their folded mantas, but the greater number on the masses of broken pavement or demolished partitions with which the floor was strewed. A picnic in the sanctuary of superstition! Can this be the soil of monkish, priest-ridden Spain, the land of the Inquisition, with its dungeons of torture and quemaderos—where kings went in solemn pomp to witness the wholesale burning of their subjects, and bore stern rebukes from pitiless inquisitors when they exhibited signs of compassion for the hapless victims? It is even the same land, but the mighty are fallen. They are outcasts and wanderers, and the citadels of their bigotry dismantled or converted to profane uses. Some are now colleges and museums; others, manufactories, barracks, hospitals, or prisons. In Seville, the place of execution is upon the wall of a convent; and I have seen strolling Thespians set up their stage in the hall of another. Verily the land is changed!

A short time sufficed to bring us to the hacienda of the family at Palos, where we found dinner waiting, and returned by nightfall to Moguer.

A few days after this excursion, the whole town was in an uproar. Seven prisoners confined in the

“carcel” had, by means of files furnished them by accomplices, succeeded in cutting through an iron grating which admitted light into their dungeon. The aperture through which they escaped was about the size of an ordinary octavo volume; and it appeared incredible that men could have forced themselves through an opening which it would have been difficult for a child to have passed through. The wise ones shook their heads on seeing this, and regarded it as a blind to divert inquiry from the real mode of escape, which was probably effected through the door, the guardian thereof being moved by sundry considerations to open it for their behoof. However, there was a great show of zeal for their recapture; horsemen were starting off at full speed, and escopetas loaded to shoot them in the event of resistance. This would unquestionably have been the fate of two condemned to the gallows, had they been overtaken by their pursuers, whose instructions were to inflict on them summary vengeance, whether they resisted or not. Such off-hand justice is by no means unfrequent in this country, and is a good deal patronised by the authorities, whom it saves a world of trouble, not to mention the miserable ration of horse-beans served out to each prisoner. The criminals, however, were spared the fate intended for them on this occasion, for the party in search returned next morning without having captured one, and without intelligence of any kind, except the surmise that they had fled northwards. This was the route I was about to take, and my friends in Moguer joined in considering it, since the escape of these prisoners, as highly unsafe; and more than one pressed me to defer my departure till further information was obtained of their movements, or at all

events to reach my destination by some circuitous course. Good manners forbade me to smile at their apprehensions ; but besides the utter unlikelihood of a few unharmed, half-starved fugitives assailing an armed traveller, my past experience had shown me how generally unfounded such representations were ; and had I lent them a credulous ear on landing in Spain, my travels might have ended in the first town I entered. Generally speaking, there are two states of mind into which the mention of the word "road" throws the Andalusian : he either becomes highly imaginative, or supremely credulous ; and it would be well for the traveller, as an universal rule, to receive with distrust the statements which under such circumstances he is certain of hearing. Nothing however, could dissuade Don Ignacio from bearing me company for part of the way : his motive for this step I suspected to originate in his fear lest harm should befall me ere I passed the dangerous localities near the town ; and as I entertained no misgivings on that score, I was the more urgent in my entreaties that he should spare himself so much unnecessary trouble : but all in vain, his determination was not to be shaken.

It came to pass, therefore, that at an early hour of the morning I was on the road to Zalamea la Real, accompanied by my friend and Don Francisco F——, a gentleman who was going on business to Veas, a village about half way to the former town. Zalamea was the first stage on a route which would lead me through the mountainous tract of which the western portion of Andalusia is composed, and, by the bridle-roads with which it abounds, bring me to Cordova without approaching the usual highway to that city. It was a journey not to be made without fatigue and some privations, but

these I was prepared to encounter in expectation of being fully repaid by some glimpses of the wild scenery I could not but meet, and some further acquaintance of a people who, living "remote from human ken," were invested with all the attraction that belongs to those whose ways are the antipodes of our own.

Our road lay up the valley of the Rio Tinto, between abundant crops of wheat and garbanzos, part of which were already reaped and laid upon the threshing-floor. This operation is similar to that noticed by travellers in the East, and consists in forming a circular area of beaten earth upon some spot exposed to the winds; the floor is then littered with the sheaves, and a number of horses, mules, or asses, being driven round the circle under the control of a man or boy, by the treading of their hoofs the grain is separated from the stalks, and afterwards winnowed.

My new companion I had met before in Moguer, and my knowledge of his history made me regard him with curious eyes. He was a short square-built man, who sat firmly on his saddle notwithstanding the curvetings of his sleek Andalusian, and the want of stirrups, which he probably disdained. His general bearing, as well as the expression of his restless eye, marked him as a man to elbow his way through the world, careless of whatever rebuffs or rude collisions he might sustain. Such in fact was his history, and it was not difficult to bring him to talk of his past career.

"You have heard, Señor, of Aguado, the famous Spanish banker of Paris. Well, he and I commenced the world together, with little enough, I assure you. It was during the War of Independence, and we became contractors to the French army here; and many a weary day have we passed together in following the



droves of cattle we collected for their use. At length the French were driven out, and Aguado accompanied them to their own land, where he is now a great man; while I, you see, am still toiling to fill the puchero. Ah, Senor! he possessed the education I am without, and but for that I might have been a millionaire like him. Me da rabia, to think of it," and thereupon Don Francisco drove his spurs into the animal's sides, causing it to plunge like a wild colt. In truth, his education amounted to a slight knowledge of reading, and the power of forming certain hieroglyphics which passed as his signature; but, these disadvantages notwithstanding, the natural energy and ability of the man had raised him to the position of a wealthy proprietor in his own town. He was the master of lands and vineyards, and a shipper of wines to England. The deficiencies of his education, however, were evidently a sore subject with him, for he recurred to the disadvantages they entailed more than once. "At all events," he continued, "my son shall never feel what I have experienced; I have sent him to England, where he is getting the best education money can procure for him."

An hour's ride brought us to Veas, having previously crossed the river by a ford. Nothing could be more monotonous than the country through which we slowly advanced towards this village. On every side were broad fields of wheat, relieved only by plantations of the sad-coloured olive, and here and there tracts of matas, or waste lands thickly clothed with shrubs, amid which a few sheep or goats struggled for a scanty subsistence. A far more agreeable prospect to the eye was presented by the steep slopes of the valley up which our route lay; vineyards clung to



these, and among them wound many footpaths, leading to hamlets whose spires were just topping the summit of the ridges. Here Don Francisco parted with us; but Don Ignacio, who originally intended to ride no further, changed his mind, and decided upon bearing me company to Zalamea. Without delay, therefore, we continued our progress; for to make a journey of nine leagues in a day, through so rugged a country as that which rose before us, demanded every moment of time, in order to obtain shelter before night-fall. A few miles beyond this ruinous village we began to feel the influence of the sierra; and exchanged the continuous flat we had been traversing for a gentle ascent, that at every step of our progress revealed something new; and for the tedious sameness, of which our eyes were weary, we had only to look back to enjoy a series of changing and beautiful views. Upon the summit of the first ridge we paused to survey the prospect that spread out far to the eye. Immediately before us we looked down upon a rapid descent, that sank into a narrow vale, the opposite side of which we must perforce climb by as steep and tortuous a path as that which conducted to the bottom. To the left, this valley opened into a wide tract of undulating surface, affording partial glimpses of the crops and woods that filled the hollow places; while far beyond rose the blue summits of the Sierra of Aracena, a cloud of vapour hovering above each peak, and following the outlines of its ranges. On the right might be seen in the dim horizon the Sierra de Berrocal, with the same snowy veil floating over, but never touching the mountain mass, and seeming like a phantom host holding its watch upon the frontiers of some world beyond.

A march in these wilds is little else than a succession of ascents and descents, and these of a breakneck description. Roads, in the usual meaning of the term, there are none; and the bridle-paths that supply their place, with a noble contempt for convenience or expedition, follow every inequality of the surface, generally descend the mountain sides where they are steepest, and cross the torrents where the passage is most difficult. Frequently, when I was the first to reach the crossing place, I have looked upwards at the string of mules following in single file, and speculated upon the mischief the fall of a single animal might cause: in that case, from the rapidity of the descent, and the impetus of its fall, it must have sent the whole of the foremost files rolling to the bottom.

Upon reaching the crest of a ridge by the usual toilsome process, we unexpectedly beheld in the succeeding hollow the tiled roofs of Valverde. The appearance of this mountain village was very unlike the invariable aspect of Andalusian pueblos. With very few exceptions, the exterior of the houses remained untouched by the whitewashing mania so prevalent in Spain, and they stood, therefore, in the native colour of the dark red stone of which they were constructed; this, together with the hue of their roofs, made it seem as if a conflagration had lately swept through the streets, and given to the whole the dull and calcined aspect they now wore. While our mozo was tending our horses in the inn, Don Ignacio and I strolled through the village. On each side we found sombre dwellings, remarkable only for their gloom and homeliness: from these we turned with more satisfaction to examine the costume of their feminine inmates, which was sufficiently singular.

A dark blue petticoat reaches a little way below the knee, showing off to advantage a neatly turned leg and ankle, which is incased in a stocking of the same colour, ornamented with white clocks. The shoes are of the unblackened leather commonly worn by the peasantry in this part of Andalusia. In place of the mantilla, a black shawl covers the head, the top of which is often surmounted by a Quaker-like hat. The women of Valverde enjoy the reputation of being pretty, and their appearance did not belie report. Their complexions are generally fair,—a style of beauty highly prized in Andalusia: when to this are added chestnut locks and a blooming cheek, they are then provided with the sum total of charms that, in the eyes of the Andalusian *majo*, complete his picture of female loveliness. As we walked through the streets, it was incumbent on our politeness to exchange greetings with the various families that sat at their thresholds, plying their household occupations in that public position, in preference to the dark interior of their dwellings. The accent in which they spoke sufficiently betrayed their Moorish ancestry; it was thick and guttural, and as different from the drawl and clipped Castilian of Seville or Cadiz, as the English of Yorkshire is from that of Bow bells. On the partition, brought into view by the door being kept open—which is the fate of nine out of ten doors in the village—the good housewives hang up for display such articles as they think will have an imposing effect upon the minds of observers. Among these, pots and pans in bright array made the most important figure; while the interstices were filled up with pictures, looking-glasses, images of the Virgin, and other finery.

As we were on our way back to the inn, we came to

a building whose narrow windows and gloomy appearance led us without inquiry to understand its use; and my companion turned aside to look in through a close grating that admitted light and air to one of the dungeons. It was so dark within that nothing was visible; and we should have concluded it was without a tenant, had not a voice issued from a corner, and in deep tones cried, "Que hay?" "La bahia junto à Cadiz," promptly replied my friend; and to this the other as quickly rejoined, "Y tambien al Puerto." What this means, the uninitiated reader will probably be at a loss to know; and I shall therefore inform him that it was merely an exchange of slang, in which the advice to mind each other's business was tendered on both sides. Our friend in the corner, however, followed up his advice with a variety of remarks upon our outward appearance; and as in this he had a great advantage, from being himself invisible, the combat was so unequal that we left him to growl out his anathemas in solitude. He was one of the seven prisoners whose escape from the prison of Moguer I have already mentioned. They had fled towards the sierra by the route we ourselves had taken; and this individual, being unable from fatigue to keep pace with his comrades, attempted to conceal himself in some growing corn near the village. It chanced, however, that he was espied by a corregidor, who observing something suspicious in this movement, demanded of him what he was doing there. He replied that he came to reap the corn, and that his fellow-reapers, having got drunk, had left him there. This answer not appearing satisfactory to the corregidor, the passport was demanded. The other at first attempted to question the authority of the village official, but on the latter despatching a friend for his

gun, at last admitted that he was without a passport, and was ready to go to prison.

A path like that by which we approached Valverde continued to wind along the ridges of the sierra, till at sunset it brought us to Zalamea la Real. Without being savage or sublime, there was a stern and lonely aspect about the scenery, that powerfully impressed the feelings; we did not meet a creature by the way, - save one, who first became visible as an object standing on the summit of a distant rock, and leaning upon what my friend imagined to be an escopeta. Both he and the mozo immediately jumped to the conclusion that he must be one of the fugitive prisoners from Moguer, —perhaps the scout of his comrades in the neighbourhood; and in a trice their own pieces were cocked, and prepared for action. As usual, it was a false alarm; the suspicious character proved to be a goat-herd tending his flock and leaning on his staff, and probably conducted to that conspicuous position by no other motive than the wish to see as much as could be seen of life, in the solitude where his days were spent. Doubtless he was an honest man and true, but clothed as he was in sheepskins from head to foot, and eyeing us intently from under a weather-beaten sombrero, he looked the savage and robber to perfection.

It was a holiday in Zalamea, as appeared by many tokens. Upon the steps of a stone cross by the roadside, as we entered, was seated a party of village maidens, clad in their gayest attire. One of them was playing the guitar, to the sound of which two others were dancing the fandango; but as soon as they caught sight of us the dance was stopped, and the pair ran away to hide themselves among their companions. Further on, as we were descending the steep and slip-



perty streets of the village, another party came in view, diverting themselves with all the simplicity of a mountain life. It was a sort of procession they formed, and the foremost couple advanced with their arms wound round each other's necks, and singing some Andalusian strain, to which the others now and then joined in chorus: their bashfulness was not awakened by our presence, and the song continued, probably to the words of a couplet improvised in allusion to ourselves, as is the common practice in this land of music and song.

The situation of the village was not unlike that of Valverde. It occupied the centre of a deep hollow in the sierra, shut out from the world, and from every prospect but the heavens overhead, by a girdle of mountain masses, as treeless and withered as if spring was a stranger to the place. It seemed, indeed, as if the verdure that might have crept along their stony sides had been swept down to the village, and the little platform on which it stood: here, from the luxuriance of vegetation, the abundance of snug hedge-rows, and the general air of industry around, the prospect was as cheerful and animating as the other was the reverse. The village itself was in nothing superior to its neighbours, but was excessively clean—a distinction it shares in common with many towns of this part of the sierra. It is no exaggeration to say, that upon their streets, as the saying is, you might safely eat your dinner. We visited the church, which contained nothing worthy of remark; but upon issuing from it our friend Don Dionisio C—— was waiting at the door to welcome us to his native village. Don Dionisio was an opulent farmer, with whom I had become acquainted in Moguer, and on his departure for Zalamea had kindly charged himself with the commission to procure me

horses or mules for my journey to Cazalla; he now informed me that he had engaged for me a couple of mules and a mozo to be depended upon. A cordial welcome, however, was not the whole of Don Dionisio's kindness; he conducted us to his home, and insisted upon our making it our quarters as long as we sojourned in the village. It was an act of charity, for which I regretted I could not offer a more substantial acknowledgment than thanks; for, in truth, any place would have been a paradise compared with the wretched abode, half stable, half caravanserai, that passed as the inn of the place.

Early the next morning Don Ignacio and myself were in the saddle, and waiting beside a fountain, on the outskirts of the village for a friend, who had promised to accompany and guide us to the mines of the Rio Tinto. As soon as he appeared, we struck into a bridle-path, that crossed several ridges where their summits were most broken and precipitous, and was altogether so villanously bad, that nearly an hour and a half elapsed ere we accomplished the whole distance, which was no more than a league, or four miles. From the moment of starting, however, the point of our destination was indicated to our eyes by a column of thin white vapour rising uninterruptedly from one spot, and then streaming away to the south: this was the smoke occasioned by the calcination of the copper ore before it is removed to the smelting furnaces. As we drew nigh to the mines, the scenery became more savage and dreary; at one point, on rounding the shoulder of a rocky range, there rose before us a ridge of dark red hue, every cliff and rock of which, in addition to the fantastic shapes assumed, seemed as if scorched and rent by the all-powerful action of fire.

A little further on, the village of the Rio Tinto came into view, situated in a narrow vale formed by the continuation of the ridge just mentioned and another equally lofty; on its sides hung some straggling pines, and occasional patches of cultivation, to balance the gaunt aspect of the other, upon which sterility seemed branded for ever. My first move, on reaching the village, was to present a letter of introduction, of which I was the bearer, to the chief director of the mines; and as soon as that gentleman comprehended the purport of my visit, he volunteered to accompany us through them as soon as he had heard mass.

In the mean time we strolled, after leaving him, to the mouth of the shaft from which the ore was drawn up. The whole machinery, if indeed it was worthy of that title, was of the rudest description. It simply consisted of a windlass, at which four men were stationed, and undergoing the severest labour in drawing up bucketfuls of ore. On one of the party making a remark to that effect, the oldest of the labourers bitterly exclaimed, "*Si, y para ganar seis reales;*" and, in truth, fifteen pence was but a poor requital for the incessant toil demanded by their occupation. The director, as soon as his morning devotions allowed him, led us to a door in the side of the mountain, over which an image of the Virgin was placed, to watch over the safety of all who passed beneath it. This was the entrance for the miners and others; a long passage then became visible, which we traversed without inconvenience till we arrived at a shaft, where it was necessary to descend by ladders. The gallery was perfectly dry, with the exception of one or two spots upon which moisture was perceptible, and over these planks were laid.

This precaution is absolutely necessary, for the water of the mines is so surcharged with the sulphate of copper as to corrode and destroy almost everything with which it comes in contact. On descending the ladders, we found the temperature sensibly increasing, and then entered a lofty and vaulted gallery, the result of the workings of ages. The ore does not run in veins, as is usual in other mines, but is found disseminated in the rock, which here forms entire hills. The process, therefore, of extracting it is very simple; it is not mining but quarrying, nothing more being necessary than to hew out the rock and send it in blocks to the furnace. As if, however, to counterbalance the ease with which it is obtained, the percentage of metal is so poor as scarcely to repay the labour of the miners; three per cent., as I was informed, being the utmost obtained from the richest portions of the rock. On all parts of this spacious gallery, above our heads, and on its sides, were beautiful crystallisations of copperas; these were caused by the water that percolated through the crevices of the rocks, and, spreading over the interior surface, deposited a lining of the most delicate blue and white tint it was possible to imagine. Further on, we entered a side gallery, in which the temperature was equal to that of an oven, and here were a few miners at work, stripped of every unnecessary article of clothing, yet with the perspiration streaming from every pore. Their haggard looks and wasted forms sufficiently denoted the unhealthiness of their occupation, and how dearly existence was purchased.

The principal attraction of the mine, however, is its stream of sulphate of copper, without which it is questionable whether its working would not be abandoned. The waters issue from the mine at two or three dif-



ferent points, and are collected a little below the village into a stream towards which we bent our steps to behold the silent formation of the copper, by a process we owe to the light of science. Along the bed of the stream a wooden trough was conducted, into which the waters flow, and in this were laid plates of iron. By a chemical affinity it is unnecessary to explain, the particles of the iron are so acted upon as to be replaced by those of copper, which, when refined, yield from seventy to eighty per cent. of pure metal. As soon as one plate is judged to be completely transmuted, it is removed, and another substituted, so that the process is continually in action. Our conductor lifted up one of the lids placed to prevent extraneous substances from falling into the troughs, and showed to our view the copper at the bottom, retaining the original form of the iron plates, and by the force of the current burnished as bright as any hand could make it.

On taking a portion of it in the hand it crumbled into powder, and when dry, was scarcely to be distinguished from the rust of iron. The water, it is hardly necessary to say, was intensely acid, from whence the stream is termed the "*agua agria*." Lower down, it serves to turn a wheel employed in the smelting-house, wherein every part of the machinery was constructed on the most rude and simple manner. A good deal of the copper is sent to Seville, where it is used in the cannon founderies, and a smaller portion finds its way to Segovia, for the purpose of being issued in the shape of coin. The chief obstacle, however, to the profitable working of the mine, arises from the scarcity and consequent dearness of fuel. The article principally, if not solely, used is pine wood, which is brought from a great distance on the backs



of mules: the nearer localities have long ago been exhausted of their timber, while from the improvident spirit so characteristic of this country, no pains have been taken to rear up forests in the room of those the axe has cleared away. Very lately the price of wood had risen, in consequence of the increased distance from whence it must be brought; and should a further rise take place, the effect would be ruinous to the establishment. Mounting our horses, we followed the windings of the road till it brought us to Planes, where there is a manufactory of copperas, the production of which is effected by the boiling and evaporation of the *agua agria*. Here, as in the other establishment, everything was primitive and rude; the fuel was the brushwood of the neighbourhood, bundles of which were from time to time cast below some copper pans in which the liquid was heated; in another corner were some tubs provided with sticks, upon which, when it cooled, the copperas might crystallise.

Planes is situated, or rather hangs, upon the side of the mountain ridge that holds the ore in its depths. From thence we proceeded to the site of the ancient mines by a narrow path, where a stumble or false step of our horses might have sent the luckless rider down the steep declivity into the bed of the Rio Tinto, some hundreds of feet below. These are situated on the reverse of the ridge, very nearly at the back of the modern workings. As the path approached them it was fringed on either side by cork trees, skirting fields of ripening grain, and finally wound between immense heaps of scorix and rubbish, that rose grim and swarthy above the luxuriant scene. In truth, continued hillocks of the latter attested the antiquity of the mines, and the toils of past generations.

There were, besides, other memorials of the past in the vestiges that survived of the ancient Bætica, for here was once a Roman town, called into existence by the mineral treasures of the mountain. These relics, for the most part, consisted of large blocks hewn out of the reddish stone of the neighbourhood, intermingled with fragments of overthrown columns; close by was the cavern-like entrance to the ancient mines. At what date, or by whom, the ore was first extracted, we have no means of ascertaining; but, at all events, from the discovery in an old working of an inscription to the Emperor Nerva, we may form some notion as to the antiquity of the town that had Roman miners for its population, and fell in the general decay of the Roman empire.

Following again the same path, we retraced our steps to Zalamea, which was reached about three o'clock, and without loss of time Don Ignacio determined to proceed, in order to reach Valverde that evening. Our parting was, I trust, one of mutual regret; neither before nor since did I meet in Andulucia his equal for manly feeling, nor a nature which so quickly awakened confidence and friendship; and short as our intimacy had been, I felt, on leaving him, as if I had quitted an old friend. Early next morning I was on the road to Aracena, the most northern of the towns I purposed visiting in this group of sierras. Our route for nearly a league was the same by which we journeyed to the mines, but when nigh them my mozo struck off to the left, and then our path skirted a ridge on which seemed traced the withering effects of fire. The whole scene was a picture of savage desolation; and though now it lay in silence and grim repose, there were yet so many vestiges of ruinous destruction visible, that the thoughts

irresistibly recurred to the period when the huge masses around were glowing with heat, and the sierra itself reeling amid the convulsive movements of nature. On all sides rocks were riven and shattered, and displayed on their sides every variety of swarthy colour, while in many places the path wound beneath cliffs of a deep blood-red hue, unrelieved by a solitary speck of verdure. The transition was, therefore, the more unexpected and welcome, when, on the other side of the range, I looked upon a smiling prospect of fruitfulness and plenty—an undulating expanse covered with fields of wheat and cork-trees. This was the character of the scenery for hours, till, on ascending a height, there rose into view the castle of Aracena: its brown masses occupied the summit of a lofty peak, from which, as from a centre, a sierra on either side stretched away into the blue horizon. It was lost to view as soon as we descended a few paces into a wooded slope, at the bottom of which the village of Campo Frio unexpectedly appeared, environed with trees, and altogether the most picturesque of the villages I had yet seen. We bent our steps to the posada, there to make our noontide repast. It was a miserable cabin, and the master of it was a short, square-built, hard-featured man, whom we had passed lounging at the door of a neighbour's house, and who speedily made his appearance to receive his guests. To receive his guests! Alas! for them, scant is the welcome in store when, faint and weary, they stand at the open door of the venta or posada. They enter: if the inn-keeper be in a particularly good humour, he deigns to cast them a look, or perhaps inquires from whence they come, and sometimes goes so far as to show where their animals may be stalled: if, however, as is usually the

case, his temper be none of the best, he sits at the doorway apparently unconscious of the arrival or departure of the strangers, or else only marking their movements with a sullen aspect. All this would be a trifle unworthy of aught but a moment's notice, were it not coupled with so much barefaced roguery and extortion as altogether to make the compound of incivility and imposition a thing very hard to swallow. My host, however, of Campo Frio, belonged to the better order of his cloth, and I reproached myself before I had been ten minutes under his roof for certain uncharitable inferences suggested by his unprepossessing exterior. Pointing to myself, he addressed the mozo: "Italiano?" "No," replied the other; "Ingles?" "Ah," he continued, turning to me, "I speaks English;" and in the same breath, as if it was a weight upon his conscience, of which he must be rid by communication with me, proceeded to unfold his history. This, in truth, was an eventful one. He had served as a soldier in the War of Independence, and in one of the luckless defeats sustained by his country's arms, was made a prisoner by the French. What induced him to enter their service he did not choose to say; but, at all events, he was withdrawn from Spain, and was a sharer in the opening battles of the Russian campaign. Fortunately for himself, he deserted to the Russians eight or ten days before the burning of Moscow and the disastrous retreat to the Vistula, but, not liking the service of his new masters, begged to be delivered to the English. The request was granted, and in course of time he reached England, and was placed in a depôt of Spaniards somewhere near London. There he remained for nearly a year, and was at length restored to his native country by way of Gibraltar.

Although a prisoner during the whole of that time, his recollection of England appeared to be far from unpleasant. Much praise did he bestow upon the treatment of himself and fellow-captives; and, in particular, he lingered with so much satisfaction upon the days when his ration of bread and meat was as much as he could devour, that I fancied he almost wished them back again, though at the expense of his liberty. All this was narrated in Spanish, the English of my host having broken down before a few words had passed his lips; yet, ludicrous as it was, no small pride did he feel in his proficiency, and, as I could see, was considered a prodigy of learning by an admiring audience, composed of his wife and children.

In the mean time, my mozo displayed our stock of eatables upon a table so low that no human legs could find room under it, and with much gravity proceeded to make a gaspacho. This is an Andalusian compound—the dish, *par excellence*, of the country. Marcos pulled forth a couple of horns—one filled with oil, and the other with vinegar—a roll of bread, and then commenced bruising a little garlic in a wooden bowl, that likewise was extracted from his wallet. Into this was poured a portion of the oil and vinegar, a couple of onions previously cut into pieces; and lastly, some large slices of bread being crumbled into it, water was added to the brim, and then the art of the cuisinier was exhausted. Of this savoury mess he offered me a share; but half-a-dozen spoonfuls sufficed to satisfy my curiosity, and I preferred the dry bread and meat with which we were provided. Seeing this, my host invited me to a share of a repast he had prepared for himself, on a table as low and uncomfortable as that at which I was seated. Vainly I endeavoured to excuse myself,



protesting that I was not hungry; that I could not think of trespassing on his hospitality; and so forth. No denial would be taken by my host, except as an offence to himself; and with many misgivings, therefore, I arose and placed myself opposite him. Between us was a bowl, containing a dark-looking fluid—the black broth of Sparta was not more repelling—on the surface of which were floating several fragments of meat; while from time to time the hand of my entertainer, which water had not in all probability touched for a month, was immersed in the mess, in pursuit of others that were hidden to the eye. At his side was a basket, containing bread, eggs, and other edibles, which he drew out and placed before me with the air of a man who had seen the world. He cast a look of contempt at the fork with which I fished out one or two of the floating pieces, and doubtless must have marvelled much at the hesitation with which I swallowed them; but, as a good citizen of the world, he said nothing, and allowed me to finish with the bread. At parting, my surprise was awakened when he sturdily refused to accept of any recompense for the little we demanded. “No, no,” he said, “you are an Englishman, and I will take nothing from you, for I have eaten the bread of your country; and, moreover, if you pass this way again, I will give you a line to a cousin of mine who lives in the Plaza (*i.e.* Gibraltar), and has a situation in the establishment of the contractor of provisions to the garrison; and for my sake I am certain he will show you every attention.” Even an attempt to slip a peseta into the hand of one of the children was no less firmly repulsed; and I quitted his roof, glad to learn that mixing with the world does not always extinguish the better feelings of our nature.

Descending the slope on which the village lies, we crossed a valley clothed with evergreen oaks, and slowly climbed the mountain confronting us. In this fashion we toiled with patient industry amid the labyrinths of a wild mountain range, our mules creeping up the steep acclivities by paths winding to the summits, and again descending their opposite sides with cautious steps. After three hours spent in this tortoise-like advance, our nearer approach to Aracena was announced by the greater abundance of trees by the wayside, and fields of grain scattered over the mountain slopes. Our path up the ascent, crowned by the castle of Aracena, was between hedges and walls, whose appearance recalled the lanes and hedgerows of England. In Andalucia there is in general no other division between fields and properties but that presented by rude embankments of earth, on which the aloe and prickly pear, with their panoply of thorns, set at defiance the passage of man and beast. If well tended, more efficient fences cannot be; but the care of the husbandman generally ceases with the first formation of the hedge: it is left to thrive or decay just as chance may decree, and hence the usual prospect that meets the eye of the traveller on surveying a cultivated expanse, is to behold it dotted with solitary aloes, marking where fences had once stood. Here however the reverse was visible; few traces of carelessness were observable, either in the fences or cultivation; and having everywhere seen the gifts of nature in this rich and fertile country rendered valueless by the apathy of its people, it was a cheering sight to encounter on spots in the midst of the sierras evidences of labour and industry similar to that by which, in my own country, the obstacles of an ungrateful climate and soil are met and overcome.

Nothing could be more picturesque than the situation of the town when it became visible upon emerging from the lane by which our approach was made. It lay in a secluded hollow of the mountains, formed by the height on which the castle stood and a corresponding eminence at no great distance, and was overhung on all sides by woody slopes. High above it were craggy ridges, upon which the blast might howl, but its voice could scarcely descend to the sequestered nook in which the town rose, so deeply was it recessed within its encompassing heights. In a few moments we traversed the streets, here as elsewhere in the towns and villages of the sierra remarkably clean, and halted before the posada, which proved to be the best I had yet met out of Seville, inasmuch as it boasted of a decent apartment or two, not altogether devoid of a regard to the traveller's comfort.

## CHAPTER VIII.

ARACENA.—ITS CASTLE.—THE INTOXICATED PRIEST.—EFFECT OF  
THE SCENERY.—EL PALACIO.—LOSE OUR WAY.—BIVOUAC IN  
THE SIERRA.—SANTA MARIA.—THE DEBATE.—THE LOST BURRO.

MINE host, though anything but a jolly fellow in proportions, for a breath might have blown him away, was at heart disposed to be complaisant, and on my inquiring for a guide to the lions of the town, volunteered his own services for that purpose. Our first visit was to the castle, whose turrets had been for half the day the object of my contemplation; and after a steep pull we stood under the walls. Near the summit stands a church, to all appearance constructed out of a portion of the ancient fortifications, but in the interior exhibiting traces of the early Gothic style of architecture. The custodier was sitting on the steps as we approached—a venerable old man, whose flowing beard and fantastic costume, added to the staff he bore in his hand, were in strict keeping with the title of hermit by which my guide accosted him; in other times he might have passed as a pilgrim, pausing here to rest before resuming his weary progress to some holy shrine.

From the summit a wide and varied prospect opened to the eye. To the south stretched a succession of plains and valleys, their fruitful soil overspread with vegetation; and beyond these, in the distance, a

wilderness of sierras, upon whose giant crests the gloom of evening was sinking fast. In the opposite direction the town lay at our feet, apparently struggling for a footing with the ridge that ran parallel with that on which we stood, and wherever the mountains receded, sending out long lines of streets to fill up the level spaces between.

At the back of the church my guide directed my attention to an arch of brick built into the rock, and bearing undoubted traces of great antiquity. At the top of the pillars, upon which the arch rested, it was possible to detect some traces of sculptural embellishments, although so obliterated by the hand of time as to render their shape or character a mere matter of conjecture. "Don't you think this looks like the head of a bull?" said my guide, pointing to one of the carvings, which consisted of a few lines scored upon the surface of the smooth stone. With some assistance from my imagination I discovered the resemblance; and then, continued he, "Does not this look like its tail?" Now, if it really was a tail, it was just as like a peacock's as a bull's, and so I suggested to my host, but with true antiquarian fervour he scouted my remark, as being conceived in a shamefully sceptical spirit. He then proceeded to narrate, how there was in relation to this bull an ancient prophecy, which thus ran: "In frente de este toro, hay un tesoro" (in front of this bull there lies a treasure): "but whether it be a mile or a yard distant, how deep, or how to be obtained, no man," said my host, "can tell." Had my host exercised as much imagination in regard to the interpretation of the prophecy as he had displayed in decyphering this memorial of the past, he might have perceived that the treasure which lay in front was the



rich and fertile country over whose vineyards and pastures, fields of grain and olive-groves, the eye could not wander without recognising in them a source of wealth far more lasting and profitable than hidden gems or gold; but influenced by the spirit of his countrymen—a spirit which would consume days or months in digging for buried riches, in the hope of attaining wealth by a sudden bound, rather than by the toilsome path of laborious exertion—he could divine no meaning in the tradition further than that prompted by its literal reading and his own unbounded faith in the existence of treasures beneath the soil.

Of the castle itself, nothing remained but fragments of mouldering walls and ruined bastions to attest that it once had been a stronghold of importance. As a modern fortress, it was incapable of the slightest defence; but from the care bestowed upon its fortifications by the Moors, and the multitude of square towers by which every accessible point was defended, it was manifest that, before the era of modern warfare, it must have played an important part in the fortunes of the surrounding district. One custom still lingered, coeval, probably, with the foundation of these walls, and on the score of its utility surviving the lapse of ages, and the ruin that had overtaken their turbaned founders. Every evening, at sunset, a light is displayed from the tower of the church by which the lower peak of this fastness is crowned; the light is maintained till morning, and is dedicated to the Virgin, who from that circumstance is styled “*Nuestra Señora de Guia*.” She is the protectress of the belated traveller, to whom this tower, sending its light for leagues through the cloud of night, rises as a beacon to guide his steps, in the same manner as, by day, he

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is directed by the castle turrets, conspicuously visible long ere he reaches the town at their base.

Next morning, in company with a gentleman to whom I carried a letter of introduction, I made a round of the churches in the town. In several there were good paintings to be seen, though sadly obscured by the veil of dust that lay thick upon them, as upon every other work of art that had escaped the white-washing mania of the custodians. In the sacristy of the parish church is a portrait of Arias Montanas, who was born at a village about two leagues from Aracena.

It is one of the penalties which the sightseer must pay for the indulgence of his curiosity in this country, that, in general, the very last things to be shown are those which are really most worthy of note. On entering a church, the sacristan immediately hurries you to the altar, in the expectation of beholding you transfixed with rapture before some vile image of the Virgin—a thing of painted wood, covered with tawdry ornaments, and, as a work of art, far inferior in taste and execution to those specimens of feminine beauty by which perfumers' shops are embellished. In the same spirit are you conducted to inspect the service of church plate, and the vestments of the church functionaries. The latter are invariably displayed with feelings of pride, while a moment's leisure is with difficulty extorted, in order to survey such of the works of the ancient masters as may hang in neglect upon the walls.

Our survey ended, I was conducted by my companion to his dwelling, and ushered into a study, from a cupboard in which he brought out a stone bottle of liqueur, and set about all the preparations for a drink-

ing match. It was not without surprise I beheld his movements: the customs of the country are opposed to strong potations at all times, and especially before breakfast; and I was at a loss to know what I should ascribe them to, till it struck me that my entertainer might be one of those who imagine, as multitudes of his countrymen do, that from dinner-time till midnight, every Englishman, the highest ranks not excepted, is in a state of intoxication; and that, as a natural consequence, nothing should I prize so much as the opportunity of indulging in the national vice. It soon, however, became obvious that this supposition was wrong, and that, if my entertainer was influenced by any motive, it was rather the wish to victimise an aged priest who had joined us in our walk, and now made one of the party. It was an easy triumph, for the failing of the poor man was written on his face; and as he never refused the bumpers with which his entertainer plied him, the result may be anticipated. In less than half an hour he was carried out of the room by an attendant; and it is but due to him to say that, for representing intoxication in all its shapes within the compass of that short period, few would venture to equal him. He was garrulous, jovial, lachrymose, amatory, sullen, and finally insensible. In the amatory stage, he advanced into the centre of the room, discoursing learnedly of the joys of love—a strange theme for old age and celibacy—and then, suddenly turning aside to the youngest of the listeners, kissed him on the cheek ere he could prevent the unwelcome salute. It was an exhibition that filled one with disgust, not so much at the pitiable spectacle I was compelled to witness, as at the heartlessness which could find sport in the degradation of grey

hairs; so I quitted my entertainer, and saw him no more.

The reverend padre, while in possession of his faculties, mentioned that the following custom prevailed in a neighbouring village when a young man wished to profess himself the suitor of some fair maiden. On that occasion he proceeds to her residence, bearing in his hand the long staff used by the mountaineers, called *cachiporra*, or shortly, *porra*, and announces his presence by a loud knock at the door. At the same time, the staff is placed by the side of it, and he retires a short distance, previously exclaiming, "*Porra dentro u porra fuera?*" (*porra* within or *porra* without?). Should the maiden be disposed to favour his suit, she approaches and removes the staff in-doors; but if averse, it is whirled to the other side of the street: whereupon the lover understands his fate, and wends his way back, rejected and disconsolate.

In the evening my *mozo* brought me the information that a party of muleteers were about to proceed to *Cazalla* with a cargo of bacon, and coupled his news with the proposal that I should defer my own departure in order to swell their numbers.

"Wherefore should I do this?" I inquired. "Are they armed?"

"No, Señor," he rejoined; "but then the advantage of their company!"

It was hard to perceive what benefits would arise from their society, though on this point both my host and *mozo* were agreed; but in reality the motive to this request lay in the well-known disinclination of all ranks in this country to travel alone. Subsequently, after some months of wandering, I felt more disposed to yield to proposals of this kind; for after the novelty

of a solitary march had worn off, it was impossible at times to repress the feeling of loneliness that crept over the spirits amid scenes of solitude as silent and lifeless as the desert.

There is something pervading the scenery of this land, the effect of which it is difficult to describe, except by saying that it impresses one as no other scenery does; a stern, and at the same time a melancholy grandeur, the latter quality predominating, even among the vast and fruitful plains you slowly traverse, and more especially when winding amid a wilderness of tenantless dehesas, or by the sides of lofty sierras. At these times there mingled with the impressions of awe and sublimity one felt, none of those elevating thoughts inspired by the contemplation of nature on a vast scale; on the contrary, the effect was somewhat repelling, and resembled that produced by gazing upon a countenance where an expression of evil mingles with noble lineaments.

While my mozo, on the one hand, was urging me to be sociable, my host came forward with the usual tale of robberies on the way. "Maldito camino!" he said; "on that road was I robbed of 8000 reals, by three men, and five tracked me all the way from Cazalla for the same purpose." A little cross-examination, however, elicited the fact that this robbery occurred three years before, our host being unarmed at the time, and that no aggressions on travellers had since that date been perpetrated; so, in despite of the warnings and prophecies of the twain, I intimated that I was prepared to depart alone next morning, and that though willing to be reinforced by the muleteer auxiliaries, I would by no means delay my movements on their account.



Before sunrise we were threading our way through a labyrinth of hedge-rows and olive-groves, with our faces turned towards Cazalla: our path doubled and wound till it conducted us to a wood of evergreen oaks, which it took more than an hour to traverse. A better ambush for the salteadores, of whom I heard so much yesterday, could nowhere be found than among the ravines and broken ground with which it was intersected. I was now journeying eastward, having, in pursuance of my original plan to keep within the province, diverged from the northerly direction I had hitherto taken, by continuing in which I should have speedily reached the frontiers of Estremadura.

For some hours our course was a gradual descent from the mountainous elevations of Aracena, by the side of a small stream, whose clear waters were hurrying to swell the current of the Guadalquivir. The stream, in fact, was our guide, and our path crossed and re-crossed it twenty times, once leading us unexpectedly to the small village of La Corte, concealed among orchards and evergreen oaks. On either side as we journeyed rose sierras with rounded outlines, differing little from those I had already crossed; from their summits descended dreary tracks of underwood to spread over their sides, and unite in the narrow vale through which we moved. Here and there a patch of bright green would come into view, denoting a partial attempt at cultivation; but, these excepted, there were no other signs, amid a progress of leagues, to testify that the country was not wholly abandoned by man.

About mid-day we passed through the village of Cala, which afforded a striking contrast to those higher up in the mountains, from the state of ruin in which it stood, superadded to the squalid misery that was ex-

pressed on the visages of a few forlorn individuals whom our appearance attracted to their doors. Our approach to it was through a wide level, covered with brushwood and straggling groves of oak; while in the distance another range, crossing our course, foretold the fatigues we were yet to encounter before our day's journey was brought to a close. Outside of the village we came to a halt beneath a chestnut-tree, and prepared to make our noonday meal. The mules were divested of their aparejo, and no sooner was the last article of their gear removed than each animal cast itself on the ground, to enjoy the luxury of a roll in the dust before Marcos fastened on the hobbles by which their erratic movements were to be restrained. This done, he compounded and discussed his gaspachos, and after smoking a paper cigar, composed himself for a siesta in the shade of the spreading foliage above our heads.

At the end of an hour we were once more on the wing. A short distance brought us to the great road from Seville to Badajos, which we crossed, not without a look of envy from myself, as I regarded its admirable condition, suggestive of whirling along at ten miles an hour of speed, and compared it with the rugged and narrow path along which our mules must crawl at a pace that consumes a whole day in performing the same distance which on the other would be the work of a few hours. I was saved, however, from further repinings by entering upon a vast undulating plain, which for beauty of a wild and striking description far exceeded anything I had yet seen. Scattered over its surface were clumps and solitary trees of evergreen oak, mingling with masses of rock, sometimes piled in cairns, sometimes strewed in profusion, but so picturesquely varied by hollows and glades as to present one of those

rare landscapes in the making of which Nature seems to have called in every charm. Art itself, in its most wayward and prolific moments, could have produced nothing to surpass this natural park. The effect was further heightened by a conical elevation in the centre, round whose summit ran a natural wall of rock, in which fancy might easily trace the mouldering battlements of a venerable castle. The resemblance, indeed, must have been striking, for it had procured for this mount the name of "El Palacio" from the dwellers in these regions. At the same time, the sinking sun was pouring a flood of light among the trees, with that splendour seen nowhere but in southern lands; so that the scene was carpeted with strange devices wrought in gold and dark shadows, and brilliant beyond description. There was warning, however, to ourselves in that same orb setting so gloriously, for by its last rays were we to seek our way over the wild sierra in front. On the other side of it were our quarters for the night, a hamlet called Santa Maria de la Zapatera. How far off it was Marcos could not recollect, for some years had elapsed since he had passed this way, and he was frequently at a loss whenever the path became more indistinct than usual.

At the foot of the sierra our path separated into two tracks, one striking up a barranco that clove the mountain from its summit to where we stood, and the other pursuing a less aspiring course along its base. As the first appeared the most direct route, we unhesitatingly selected it, and for nearly an hour breasted the mountain side, our path, from the darkening light, becoming every moment less distinguishable. At length it was lost among the tall brushwood, which grew up to the very top of the ridge. In truth, it was evident before

we thus came perforce to a halt, that the track had been long in disuse, and we had persevered only from the reflection that "returning were as tedious as go o'er." However, the former seemed now our only alternative; and without a moment's delay, for the short twilight was at its close, the mules were forced through the bushes in the direction most likely to conduct us to the other path, which unquestionably was the right one. No idea can be formed of the difficulty of such a proceeding, however simple it may seem. Our tired animals struggled for a short distance with the matted growth of the brushwood, which it required all their strength and weight to part asunder, and in doing which their riders ran no small risk of being swept off their backs by the violent recoil of the elastic boughs.

The contest was, however, beyond their power to continue long, even had they been fresh and vigorous, and endowed with the strength of giants. Once more we came to a stand-still; our animals, with their limbs trembling and sides heaving from their excessive toil, refused to advance a step further. The present dilemma was considerably worse than the first: we were now caught in a trap of branches and twigs from which there appeared no release; we could neither return nor advance, even if we had known what direction to take. For my own part, I saw no better prospect than to lie down where we were, and wait till the returning light came to our aid. This was no novelty to my mozo, who, as he assured me, had "camped out" for nights while acting once as an itinerating vendor of oranges; but I was unused at that time to a "lodging upon the cold ground," and felt doubtful whether contact with mother earth under such circumstances was an invigorating treatment for one who had left England as an



invalid. Still, there was no remedy, and after a brief debate we urged our reluctant animals a few yards deeper in the underwood, and brought them to a cleared space espied by the eye of Marcos. Dismounting here, we made our preparations for a bivouac. The spot we had now reached was a singular one: it was a patch of verdure, scarcely a few yards in circumference, and which by some chance had sprung up amid the surrounding brushwood. Nothing could surpass in richness and fragrance the herbage which grew upon it, and now promised a couch as perfumed and soft as that of a Sybarite. In a few minutes the task was over of unlading the mules and shackling their fore legs, lest they should be tempted to stray too far. Another moment or two was devoted to the contents of our wallets, and then Marcos proceeded to construct an off-hand pallet out of the trappings strewed around us. A horse-rug did duty as a mattress, or rather was stretched upon the thick natural mattress of wild flowers and herbage that covered the ground; a saddle served for a pillow; and what more would the tired traveller desire? Certain it is, that no sooner had I rolled myself in my manta and laid my head on the saddle, than the fatigues of a long march of nine leagues speedily brought sleep to my eyes. The last thing they rested upon was the spectacle of Marcos, with his horns of oil and vinegar before him, proceeding, despite of the darkness and the manifold difficulties, to the concoction of the everlasting gaspachos.

About midnight I awoke with a sense of oppression on my breast, which I found was caused by my careful attendant having heaped upon my person all the rugs and coverings upon which he could lay his hands. He himself reposed at my feet, indulging in nasal sounds



loud enough to scare away such evil-disposed wolves as might be within hearing ; but at this time of the year little danger was to be apprehended from their fangs. The darkness, however, had given place to the brightest moonlight I ever remember to have seen. Not even beneath the tropics have I witnessed anything comparable to that glorious silver light, diffused as I then saw it between heaven and earth ; so brilliant and so palpable was the effulgence, that it seemed as if the rays might be caught in the hand and twined round the fingers in coils of lustre ; and I almost fancied the bushes bent beneath their weight. Perhaps, from the novel circumstances of the moment, the scene left a more vivid impression than similar ones have done, for I readily call to mind that hour of moonlight, with all its solemnizing influences, the deep silence unbroken by aught except the distant baying of some watch-dog, or the whispering of the night air among the shrubs, the mountain swelling upwards from our resting-place in rounded lines, and the shapes of others looming indistinctly through the silver haze. I bring to mind also having apostrophised the slumbering Marcos ; and blessed my stars that he was the owner of an honest heart, for had he been so inclined I might never have wakened more. It was just the place where a thrust of the navaja might be given with the certainty that no tales would ever be told of its work. How it further fared with us I know not, until at earliest break of dawn we were astir, when Marcos went in search of the mules, with which he soon returned. Upon awaking, refreshed and invigorated, I reflected that a traveller might find many a worse place of rest than a grassy couch beneath the serene sky of Andalucia.

To be sure, there are no curtains, nor pillows of

down, and your toilet is made when you have given yourself a hearty shake and run your fingers through your hair; but then there is no landlord to face in the morning, no vampires to disturb your night's rest, nor cry of fire to cause alarm; no damp sheets to sow rheumatism in the bones;—in short, you mount and ride away, as I did, wondering how people survive the dangers and discomforts of sleeping under a roof.

Now that the light of day made every object visible, it was no difficult matter to discover the right path. Into this our animals worked their way, through brake and briar, with comparatively little trouble, as it was all down hill; and we now found that the track, instead of breasting the sierra in Roman fashion, coasted along its base in a southerly direction. It led us to a "puerto," or mountain pass; and through the gap the ascent was an easy one to the summit, from whence, on the other side, there came into view the little hamlet of Santa Maria, where our quarters ought to have been the previous night. From our elevated station its cluster of lowly roofs, surrounding the village spire, seemed to rise in a little world of their own, the limits of which were the encircling sierras that closely hemmed in the small plain in the centre of which it stood. A slender stream wound round it and watered a succession of meadows, whose freshness and verdure gave an air of softness to this pastoral scene, in strong contrast with the savage and dreary mountains that towered above us. By the side of the same stream, leaping and brawling down the pass, we descended to the little valley, and entered the hamlet, whose inhabitants, even at that early hour, were up and busy. Marcos immediately hied to the alcalde, for the purpose of getting our passports viséd. While he was absent in

the workshop of the village Vulcan, who, it appeared, united in himself both these offices, I begged a glass of water from a woman, who, with many others, had been drawn to her door by the unwonted arrival of strangers. "Usted es de muy lejos?" (you are from afar?) she inquired as I thanked her. "Si, Señora; I am from England." "From England?" she repeated; "where is that town?" "It is a kingdom, far, very far, in that direction," I replied, pointing to the north-west. "Ah, Señor," she added, "my pueblo is also far off; I am from Llerena." "From Llerena in Estremadura?" "Yes," she answered, with a sigh. The reader will, perhaps, smile at my questioner's notions of distance, when he is informed that Llerena was only twelve miles from her present abode.

Such exaggerations, common as they everywhere are among the untravelled, are particularly so in Spain, because there a town may be very nigh another, and yet, from the wretched state of the roads, and the absence of the usual facilities for communication, be accessible only by a journey demanding much time and fatigue to accomplish. Under such circumstances, it becomes virtually as remote from its neighbours as if it lay in another kingdom. But the evil does not end here: the effect of this state of isolation—a state in which many if not most Spanish towns exist—is to contract the range of their sympathies, and to reduce their love of country to a selfish but not unnatural predilection for the narrow circle that bounds their knowledge. Hence has arisen that spirit of localism—the bane of Spanish nationality—which he who strives to make them a united people will find to be an obstacle less readily overcome than those other difficulties, in the shape of a diversity of languages, manners, and privileges, with which he

must contend. How deeply ingrained this spirit is in the Spanish character, we cannot fail to learn from the experience of past years; but if it were not so, every traveller who makes it his study to know the people of this country, while listening to the laudation which each individual bestows upon his native pueblo, coupled to a depreciating tone in respect to others, becomes impressed with the truth, that to maintain that fancied or real superiority, considerations of right or justice would be lightly regarded. All would desire to see their country the first nation in the world—with this difference, that the first of its towns, and the lawgiver to the others, should be that particular community to which each belongs. While this feeling, therefore, exists, it would be hopeless to see the spirit of dissatisfaction nowhere lingering. To eradicate it, one must break down the physical barriers within which it takes root and flourishes. When these are surmounted by the conversion of the almost impassable by-paths into practicable cross-roads, and by the formation of new routes across the wild mountain chains that traverse the land, the usual consequences will follow: communities and kingdoms hitherto estranged will be linked more closely together, and in the widening range of their sympathies, will think and act, not for themselves, but for the welfare of the whole.

The village official did not detain us long, and our exit from his pastoral kingdom was by the banks of the stream whose rise we had witnessed higher up in the sierra. It led us again, after its brief pause among the green pastures, to a point in the encircling range where an opening admitted a passage for its waters into mountain scenery as wild and savage as that among which they first saw the light. Our route from thence was a

winding track by the base of lofty elevations that became at every step more stern and imposing. There was, however, something inexpressibly sombre in their features, which not even the flood of noonday light could lighten up; the most perfect solitude reigned as we became involved deeper in their recesses; and but for the path we followed, upon which the vestiges of footsteps were visible, we might have fancied ourselves in a wilderness which no foot dared to cross. It was refreshing meanwhile to have at our side the streamlet of which I have already spoken; there was society and companionship in the flow and life of its waters, the only moving things in that silent waste besides ourselves; and I felt sorry when we turned away to strike into the road that leads from Guadalcanal to Cazalla. Proceeding by this new route, the character of the scenery remaining unaltered, we reached another stream, on whose banks we halted under the shade of a wild ash, to make our repast after the usual gipsy fashion. Unlike the disporting current of the other, this moved on slow and sluggish, and formed in front of us a pool of an olive-green tinge. It was an admirable spot for a bath, and had probably revived the strength of many a wearied passer-by, just as it was now refreshing the person of a countryman, whom we found luxuriating in its waters, while another was waiting for him on the brink. In a moment an acquaintanceship was struck up between the twain and my guide, much to the satisfaction of the latter, to whom a new conversationist had become a novel event since our departure from Aracena.

As a proof of the untravelled state of these mountain-paths, I may mention that, from daybreak of the preceding day till the present hour, during which time we ac-



complished fifty miles of our journey, we had encountered no one on our way; neither had we, except in the villages we traversed, espied a human figure. Some idea, therefore, may be formed of the eagerness with which my guide flung himself upon his new associates, and of the unbroken flow of his powers of speech; which, to compare small things with great, resembled the rush of a torrent that, having been pent up by some powerful impediment, suddenly found egress for its accumulated waters. The first inquiries of the trio were respecting their places of birth. My guide was from Zalamea, and his acquaintances from a village in the neighbourhood; this was enough to open their hearts, and cause them to regard each other as brother serranos. "Pay-sano," said the eldest of the pair, quite delighted with meeting a countryman, "sientese usted aqui," at the same time spreading a manta on the ground and inviting him to a share thereof. The young one, again, was not a whit less friendly, though in a different style. He communicated several particulars respecting his past life, and ended with the subject of his future prospects; a question that at the moment deeply engaged his thoughts. It appeared that an uncle of his, a sargento mayor in a regiment stationed at Madrid, had written to him to come up and push his fortunes in the metropolis. In proof of this, he pulled out a dirty and tattered letter, which he handed to Marcos to read for the benefit of the company. Marcos, however, was no scholar, and could make nothing out of it; and so, with the concurrence of the other, it was resigned to me. However, I had no better success in the matter of decyphering its contents. As, however, writing, spelling, and grammar are no part of a military education, it is no discredit to the worthy sergeant who penned the

despatch to say, that his penmanship was a collection of "pot-hooks and hangers" that defied the powers of any mortal but himself to read. But the want of proper information did not prevent Marcos from seizing upon so capital an opportunity for giving advice gratis. He debated the question, to go or not to go, with a zeal for the young man's interests that was truly edifying; and I am bound to record our decision was unanimous;—I say our, for my opinion was likewise requested upon the merits of the case. It was resolved that he should stay at home. What were the reasons that influenced my fellow-counsellors I cannot call to mind; for my own part, I was moved by the consideration that so simple a swain was no match for the wits of the Madri-lenians, even under the auspices of a sergeant of the line.

During this conflict of tongues our teeth had been no less actively employed in the demolition of our various stores of provender. An hour having been thus spent, I started for Cazalla, much against the inclinations of Marcos, who would rather have postponed accomplishing the three leagues that remained of our journey until the sun had so far declined as to permit us to travel without being scorched by its noontide fierceness, which in the valleys and gorges was at times well-nigh insupportable. Our new friends, being bound for the same town, prepared to join company, but a loud outcry from the youngest arrested our departure. His burro was gone—had mysteriously disappeared—and certainly was nowhere visible. Stranger still, although the others dispersed in search of it, no traces were found of its movements, and in fact nothing to explain this unaccountable disappearance. Upon the other side of the stream there stood a

goatherd, a figure clothed from head to foot in sheepskins, and who had stationed himself there to feast his eyes with the unwonted sight of his fellow-creatures in that lone region ; and himself resembled some wild animal of the forest, attracted by the intrusion of the human form to gaze on the strange spectacle. Upon him fell the suspicions of the owner of the lost burro ; and without considering the manifest improbability of the deed, he advanced to his own margin of the stream, and placing himself in a belligerent attitude, menaced the other with violent death in a variety of ways if he did not instantly restore the missing animal. Such a charge, as was to be expected, only called forth a gruff answer ; and there is no knowing to what lengths rage might have hurried the nephew of the sergeant, had not one of the company, while looking at some osiers overhanging the stream, espied the animal under their shade ; its head was just appearing above the surface, the rest of the body being under water. The poor animal had either slipped in by accident, or, in imitation of its master, was recruiting its forces by a cool dip in the stream previous to a toilsome clamber in the sierra. From the moment of setting forth, our way was a continued ascent ; the first part through a wild pass called the Puerto Alto : about a league from Cazalla the character of the country altered, and our progress was through lanes deep sunk in the soil ; from the high banks on either hand hedges and trees threw a grateful shade across our steps. By and by land in cultivation appeared, and then vineyards and gardens, surrounding country houses ; all of these possessed orchards not far off, and many had trellised arcades of vines leading up to their doors. Amid this smiling prospect we approached our destina-

tion. Upon the very summit of the ridge we found a gentle hollow, in the centre of which, as in a nest, lay this mountain village. This site had probably been chosen by its founders from its affording the best shelter from the blasts of winter, for its position is undoubtedly high, and the air during that season must be sharp and piercing. I went straight to the posada, but its appearance and condition bespoke better accommodation for beasts than for man, or rather none at all for the latter. As such an establishment as a *casa de pupilos* was unknown, I was perforce compelled to apply for assistance in this dilemma to no less a personage than the *comandante de armas*, to whom I carried a letter of introduction. In doing so I did not anticipate that the courteous *comandante*, after reading the letter and hearing my request, would insist upon my making his house my home during my stay in the town. Invitations of this nature are to be estimated more by the tone and manner of the speaker than by the literal meaning of his words; and so much frankness accompanied the offer that I could not doubt its sincerity. I therefore accepted it; nor had I reason subsequently to believe I had construed the words for more than they were meant.

## CHAPTER IX.

CAZALLA.—THE IRON MINES OF PEDROSO.—ANDALUSIAN POLITENESS.—THE GENTLE BEGGARS.—TORQUEMADA AND HIS ASS.—CONSTANTINA.—LETTERS OF INTRODUCTION.—BEAUTIFUL VIEW FROM THE CASTLE.—THE REGIMENT IN PETTICOATS.

THE following day I rested on my oars, being in need of some repose, as every bone and muscle was aching from the severity of an almost uninterrupted ride of forty-eight hours under a blazing sun: for that day I was sated with an inspection of the only church in the town. This was an edifice in no respect remarkable for beauty or symmetry, being in fact partly unfinished; the original design, after the plainest style of Gothic, having been mingled with sundry additions in the shape of a belfry and porches, which were conceived in the true pepper-box order of architecture. The remainder of the day was spent in strolling along the shady lanes in the environs, sometimes alone, and sometimes accompanied by my host when his duties afforded him leisure. I ought to mention that he had passed the middle term of life, and was a bachelor, and that his household was superintended by an elderly female and her niece, and that both were natives of the Basque Provinces. The next day, however, I was again in the saddle, and, accompanied by the comandante and several members of the ayuntamiento of the town, on my road to the iron mines of Pedroso, or, more accurately, the



foundry attached to them. About this establishment there was little to detain one long. I found its merits very much overrated; and having been a listener as we rode along to the speculations of my companions regarding the amount of injury likely to be done by it to the iron works of my country, I could not help smiling on seeing this formidable competitor, whom the smallest of its giant rivals in England might swallow up with ease. The situation is in a narrow valley, through which straggle the dwellings of the workmen and superintendents: it is said to be very unhealthy, especially in summer, when agues prevail to a great extent. Nearly all the iron manufactured goes to the establishments of the Rio Tinto and Almaden del Azogue; in the former to be converted into copper by the process I have already described, and in the latter to furnish the jars in which the quicksilver is transported. While the comandante and myself were inspecting the manufactory, the members of the ayuntamiento were closeted with the directors of the mines, being in fact a deputation from the civic authorities of Cazalla in reference to some claims upon the company. Apparently the dispute, whatever was its origin, had come to no amicable termination, for upon inquiring for our comrades we were directed to a farm-yard, where, to our surprise, we found them congregated. Although worsted in the fray, they still made an uncompromising stand for their dignity, and would not lower it by accepting any civilities, far less entering a house belonging to the enemy. Hence, therefore, the reason why we beheld them rolled in their mantas and stretched on the straw, disposing themselves to repose, like warriors after a hard-fought battle. They were now only waiting for our arrival to fall, like stalwart

men as they were, upon the provender, of which some of the party, in anticipation of such a result, had prudently laid in a store.

Next day was that of Corpus Christi, a high festival in the Romish calendar, and throughout Spain celebrated by processions and other solemnities. I had seen in all its pomp and circumstance the "funcion" wherewith Seville honours that day; and remembering the levity and sneers to which the spectacle gave rise among the bystanders with whom I was accidentally mingled, I was anxious to know if the worshippers of Cazalla treated their images more reverently than did those beside whom I stood in the shadow of the great cathedral. Nothing of the kind, however, was observable here: all were serious onlookers, and allowed no words to escape their lips derogatory to the splendour of the procession. This consisted of an image of the Virgin, clothed, as usual, in a black velvet robe spangled with silver; in front moved a few banners carried by priests, whose expression I liked better than the stolidity of countenance that characterises their brethren of Seville; and in the rear followed a long string of women and children. Neither was their gravity disturbed by witnessing the prodigious efforts to keep step of four men and a corporal of the Cazalla nacionales, who formed a guard of honour to close the procession: their performances in that way outdid anything the most awkward squad could get up.

In the evening my host made his appearance in full evening costume. I may remark, that in this the sur-tout, so far from being excluded, figures at parties just as frequently as the dress coat. Addressing me as if I were the master of the house, and he the guest, he requested permission to absent himself for an hour or

two from my society. In the style and nature of his request there was much to call to mind the formal politeness for which the old Spaniards were so famous: many traces of this still linger, in despite of the growing attachment throughout the nation for French manners, and a certain off-hand manner on the part of the rising generation, which is affected as being the sign of manliness.

Of these old ceremonious observances, by far the most troublesome to the stranger is that which enjoins him, when at table, to address an invitation to share the good things thereon to such individuals as may enter the room in which he is seated: it is a mere courtesy, and the traveller will frequently hear it extended to him by the peasant on passing the door, before which he is devouring his repast of bread, garlic, and oranges. It was long, however, before I schooled my tongue to utter the phrase in which the offer was couched, although well aware that it was neither expected nor intended that its purport should be understood in a literal sense. As long as this backwardness lasted, I doubt not I suffered in the estimation of native politeness, and was set down as a proud Englishman, "sin educacion," or at least so prejudiced in favour of my own customs, as to consider those of the country in which he dwelt as unworthy of adoption. Such, I fear, is the impression generally created by our conduct in regard to continental forms of politeness. Whenever these are harmless, it must be confessed, an obstinate adherence to our island customs is without excuse: yet, with every desire to be compliant, it is no easy matter to overcome an inward repugnance to saying what one does not mean; and as such a feeling is less understood among our continental neighbours

than at home, it seldom enters among the motives to which they attribute our aversion to some of their peculiar usages and styles of phraseology.

As it was the last evening I was to spend in Cazalla, I set forth for a farewell stroll among its shady lanes: it was a luxury I might not soon enjoy, and I was resolved to take advantage of the opportunity to the utmost. The apartment I occupied communicated with the sala, or principal room of the house, through which it was necessary to pass; and on my opening my door I beheld my host's housekeeper and her niece seated at its solitary table, and manifestly in deep distress of mind. Grief is a sacred thing, and I felt unwilling to intrude upon them; but as there was no other mode of egress, I could only steal as cautiously as I could towards the outer door. My consternation, however, was great when I found that the further I advanced into the room, the louder became the sobs of the females. I halted, uncertain what to do or say, until it flashed across my mind that somehow or other I might be connected with their sorrow. What have I done, thought I, to vex these poor people? but, at all events, it is my duty to inquire; which I accordingly did.

"Ay de mi," said the old lady; "I am a Basque, of good blood, and never thought I should be brought to this; but we are doomed to trials, and I submit, although I cannot help repining a little." This moralising vein I thought highly commendable, though rather out of place, and I complimented her for the Christian spirit she displayed. "So you see," she continued, "another misfortune has occurred to us to-day; a little account has been sent in, which we are unable to pay. Ave Maria! that I should have lived to endure this."

I now understood the drift of the old hypocrite, who was vainly endeavouring, with the corner of her apron, to squeeze a tear from her eye. Making a virtue of necessity, I inquired what was the amount of the demand.

"Three dollars," exclaimed the two in a breath; and accordingly the three dollars took their flight from my purse.

"But you will say nothing about this to the comandante?" they said, when I turned to depart.

"Palabra de honor! no," I responded, and left the gentle beggars in possession of their ill-gotten charity, to moralise in my turn upon the manifold tricks that are played upon travellers.

At five o'clock the next morning I was on my way from Cazalla to Constantina, passing through a country eminently beautiful, while every charm in the landscape was enhanced by the delightful freshness of a southern morning. The road led down a valley whose sides were carefully cultivated, and at every step our path was crossed by brooks of the clearest water. Then there were on either hand those deep-worn traces of which I have already taken note, each one roofed over with the thick foliage of overarching trees, and promising coolness and shade, however high the sun might be in the heavens. The only drawback to the perfect enjoyment of this lovely scene arose from the conduct of my guide, who was much given to profane swearing, and unmerciful usage of his burro. On remonstrating with him in regard to his cruelty, he chose to be offended, and offered me advice in his turn.

"Take care, Señor," said he, "how you interfere between a man and his donkey, which is just as bad as interfering between man and wife; and if you do,



perhaps you may get the answer of Torquemada cast in your teeth."

"What was that?" I inquired.

"Why, it so happened that Torquemada was beating his donkey very severely, when a courtier came by and bade him be more merciful to his beast. 'I shall do so for the future,' said Torquemada, 'since I now find he is a relation of yours, from the interest you take in him.' Wasn't that well said, Señor?"

"Passing well for a beater of donkeys."

On approaching Constantina, the termination to the valley through which we wound, was an Alameda of magnificent elms, by which we entered the town. At the other end of the long street of which it consists was the house in which I had engaged an apartment, having previously sent intimation to that effect from Cazalla; and my landlord, having seen me pass, came running after to receive me. The next thing was to deliver my letters of introduction. This was always an agreeable task, as I invariably found a kindly welcome awaiting me, as much, perhaps, for the sake of the country of my birth, as from the recommendation of the friends by whom I was introduced. It is a pleasure to me to record, as the result of having presented more than fifty letters of introduction during the course of my wanderings in Andalusia, that wherever I went I was met with frankness and cordiality. Once, but only once, did I fail to experience the reception I believed I had a right to expect. At the same time it is right to caution the reader against supposing, that introductions in this land are, as at home, mere tickets for dinners. Spain is not a dinner-giving country, and its civilities are seldom brought to bear upon the appetites of strangers.

Notwithstanding this, there is more real kindness in the many little services which an introduction to a Spanish house secures to the bearer, than in the formal invitation to dinner that in England succeeds the presentation of a similar despatch, and generally constitutes the sum total of attention. I always found, on the part of my Andalusian friends, so much willingness to second my wishes, that I sometimes regretted having given them expression, when I saw the trouble of which I was the cause. Besides this, their offices as guides to the places of note in their respective towns were freely at my command, and whatever local information I desired was hunted up with as much ardour as if it were for their own use. Above all, I cannot forget how deeply indebted I was to their local knowledge for a service the value of which is only in Spain to be fully appreciated—that of procuring muleteers and guides upon whose honesty and faithfulness reliance might be placed.

In the cool of the evening I made my way to the castle, whose grey battlements crown a steep isolated eminence, the base of which is half-encircled by the town. The ascent was by a road practicable for carriages, and was the work of the French. During the War of Independence this stronghold was carefully fortified by them, and converted into an important post in the line of communication between Andalusia and Estremadura. Hence, from the additions and alterations it underwent in their hands, little remains of the original fortress except the “keep,” one or two massive towers at the angles, and the algibe, or reservoir of water. But the imperishable jewel of this ancient place of strength, one which neither the Frank nor Moorish spoiler could deface, was the magnificent view

to be enjoyed from the summit of its venerable walls. For extent and variety of scenery, I had as yet seen nothing in Andalucia to compare with it. Far to the south, the eye ranged unobstructed over sierra and plain, till it rested upon a ridge just melting into the horizon; this was the sierra of Carmona, and that town, though distant forty miles, was plainly visible. On a clear day, it is possible for the eye to pierce still further, and to behold the Giralda of Seville rising above the spires of the city; but a hazy mist, caused by the heat, hung like a veil over that quarter, and shrouded that familiar object from my vision. In the immediate neighbourhood of the town the prospect was a rich variety of gardens, olive plantations, and vineyards, intermingled in picturesque confusion, everywhere mounting the surrounding heights, and clinging to their steepest slopes. Looking back in the direction of Cazalla, all was an assemblage of mountain summits, rising above each other in a succession of ridges, till a loftier range surmounted this giant host, and, reflecting back the hue of heaven, was distinguishable only by the serrated edges of its crest and its deeper colours, from the canopy of blue that rested on its peaks. Such a scene, from the absence of every harsh feature, and from the rich tints in which the most prominent objects were clad, was one of exquisite beauty; and accustomed as I was to behold only a sad and stern expression in the scenery of this province, I was the more forcibly struck by the softness that here diffused itself over the landscape, and by the presence of charms I had deemed strangers to the land.

The position of Constantina is undoubtedly high, and a good deal of snow falls in the neighbourhood during winter. This is industriously collected and

deposited in an ice-house, for the purpose of being forwarded to Seville. Last winter was one of exceeding mildness, and, in consequence, the usual supplies of snow failed here ; so that the Sevillanos were compelled to seek in the sierra of Ronda the means of concocting the icy compounds and draughts indispensable to existence in a town that may well boast of being the hottest in Spain.

✓ Descending to the town, I strayed to the Alameda, which I had already passed through ; and visited the source of a streamlet that, bursting forth by a copious spring, waters the principal street of the town, and on the outskirts serves to turn several mill-wheels. This fountain is situated in the garden of the Franciscan convent, adjoining the Alameda: the waters gushed forth with great violence, and were collected in a square basin built to receive them. Within the convent another spring issues to the light, and was surrounded with baths for the use of the fraternity ; but these, like the other portions of the building, have suffered from the state of neglect to which conventual establishments have been devoted since the suppression of the monastic orders. Lower down, in the course of the brook, the banks become highly picturesque: old-fashioned mills and dwellings, mingled with overshadowing trees, line the stream that dashes at speed over a rocky bed. The oleander, with an abundance of other shrubs, hang over the current, and climb among grey masses of stone projecting from either side. In the distance, the time-worn castle rises in the hoariness of antiquity, to mingle recollections of the past with this scene, wherein the verdure of nature, and the stir and life of the hurrying waters, are all emblematical of the present.

The couple in whose house I lodged were good-



natured and civil, and disposed to render me every service. The master thought it his duty to accompany me everywhere. No sooner did he see me with my hat in hand than he seized his own, and forth we went; whether it was to a tertulia or a stroll was a matter of perfect indifference to him. I suspect he acted under the impression that, without his assistance, I should infallibly be lost in the intricacies of the town—which by the way, consisted merely of one long street. He is the owner of a small possession, that just yields him a maintenance; yet, with the *dolce far niente* spirit of the land, he is content with this, and aspires to nothing beyond satisfying his daily wants. His property provides him a roof over his head, a cloak and cigar, not to mention a miserable pony, that is stabled in the room next to mine—for so things are managed here: and what more would a genuine son of Andalusia demand to make life flow without a murmur? Every evening he proceeds to the house of the estanquero, or privileged vendor of tobacco, where a kind of tertulia is held: and punctually at ten returns to supper. So has he done for years past; so will he do for the future; and thus the sands of his life run out unshaken and untroubled, and its close will be regarded by his fellows as the end of an enviable lot.

Neither in this town nor in Cazalla have the male inhabitants a news-room, or public place of resort; and, strange to say, there is no café. It would be wrong, however, to infer from this fact that the good citizens are devoid of the usual social qualities of their countrymen; in fact, the deficiency in both towns is supplied by substitutes which are rather singular. In Cazalla the point of union is a barber's shop, while a carpenter's does similar duty here. In these, at all hours of



wf the day, except those devoted to meals and the siesta, might be seen congregated a knot of politicians or group of idlers, busily discussing the affairs of state, and one and all wrestling sore with time. Sometimes, when their numbers are too many for the shop, the party adjourn to the street, and bringing out chairs, form a wide circle, while one reads the news aloud, or conversation passes round. This, it must be confessed, is a primitive state of things, but it is akin to the humour of the people, who are disposed to court publicity rather than otherwise. At these reunions it rarely happens that the stranger gathers information worth remembering; for, as may be imagined, the chief subjects of discourse refer to local politics or family histories, so that, on the whole, he would do well to avoid them. For myself, the principal source of the amusement I derived was from the queries put to me regarding Inglaterra: these were generally of such a nature as to betray a woeful degree of ignorance on the part of the speakers. Geographical knowledge, I need not say, is at the lowest ebb here, and hence I was frequently called upon to rectify the most ludicrous blunders. More than once it was manifest that my questioner was puzzled to tell whether London was in England or England in London; and, in truth, the words are often used synonymously. On one occasion a priest, who had been in Gibraltar, and seen there a regiment of Highlanders in the "garb of old Gaul," volunteered the information that the "regiment in petticoats" was invested with this feminine attire as a punishment for having misbehaved on the field of battle!

Of course, I fired up at this attack upon the gallantry of my Celtic compatriots, and assured my clerical informant that their costume, so far from being a badge

of ignominy, was worn by thousands, and that its origin was so ancient as to be lost in obscurity of history. My explanation, however, was far from shaking his faith in the "weak invention" I have just recorded. Scotland, he understood, was a cold country, and it was consequently impossible that a costume so ill-adapted for a northern region should prevail there. In vain I represented that the race by whom it was worn were of hardy frames, and being inured from their infancy to brave in that garb the rigours of the seasons, became insensible in time to the influences of climate. I was listened to with a smile of incredulity, which waxed more and more on my quoting the well-known anecdote of Sir Ewen Cameron, of Lochiel, who reproved his son for effeminacy because the latter used a snow-ball for his pillow when the twain lay down to pass the night on the snow. To the last the padre continued sceptical; he combated my facts with reasonings as original as his opening statement; and as the reward for my well-meant endeavours to defend the Gael, I had the satisfaction of finding that he regarded me as a second Baron Munchausen, in consequence of the anecdote to which I have alluded. It was in a somewhat different spirit that another gentleman accosted me, and, prefacing his remarks by professions of high regard for the English nation, proceeded to relate that he could do no less than entertain a warm feeling for them, either as a nation or individuals, inasmuch as it was his boast to possess English blood in his veins. In proof of this statement, he produced a roll of parchment, which on inspection I found was a document from Heralds' College, setting forth that a certain John King, of Wells, Somersetshire, had every right and title to be considered a gentleman. This individual, it

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appeared, had left his country prior to the year 1610, for reasons unknown to my informant, and established himself in Carmona. There he married, probably, into some house proud of its "sangué azul:" on such an occasion proofs of gentle blood would be required ere he could wed the daughter of a "Christiano viejo y rancio," and Heralds' College would, therefore, come into requisition. The only offspring of this marriage was a daughter, from whom was descended my intelligent friend. In connexion with this I may observe, that it is by no means unusual to find throughout Spain families whose ancestors have been natives of Great Britain or Ireland. The latter isle can, however, boast not only of having transplanted more of her children to the soil of Spain than either of the sister kingdoms have done, but of having acquired by the deeds of her offshoots a degree of renown to which the others cannot aspire. She has been to Spain, what Scotland before the Union was to the Low Countries and Germany—a source of military talent, which, despairing of distinction at home, had to seek its field of fame among the distractions of foreign countries. In that career it is not surprising that the sons of Ireland should have prospered: in a land where there is courage, though rather of a passive than active kind, their impetuous energy and daring could not fail to cut a path to honours; and hence the rise of such men as Sarsfield, the O'Donnells, Flinter, and others of lesser note.

## CHAPTER X.

THE MOVILIZADOS.—THE CALLEJUELAS.—LA PUEBLA.—PLAIN OF  
THE GUADALQUIVER.—POSADAS.—THE SPANISH ASS.—ALMODOVAR  
DEL RIO.

IN the phraseology of modern Spain, the assault and spoliation of travellers on the king's highway is not designated as it is everywhere else, a highway robbery, but is somewhat ambiguously styled a "novedad" or novelty. Of late no novelties of this disagreeable kind had occurred on the road from Constantina to Puebla de los Infantes; but as a portion of it, from time immemorial, had borne the worst of characters, I deemed it best to provide myself with a couple of men as a protection to my person and property. The men were movilizados, a body whose duty it is to patrol the roads and keep them clear of brigands. For this service they were admirably adapted, chiefly from the fact of their being natives of the vicinity, and in possession of that knowledge of the country, its paths, and haunts for desperate characters, without which brigandism can never be effectually extirpated from the localities in which it has taken root.

At four in the morning we started, just as the light enabled the eye to see objects distinctly. Foremost rode my escort, whose attire and accoutrements would have raised a smile at the Horse Guards. Their dress—for uniform it could not be called—consisted of a

short jacket, conical hat, and the leather leggings worn by the country people. At the right side hung a short escopeta or fowling-piece, hooked to the saddle, but in such a way as to be withdrawn and discharged at a moment's notice; at the left depended a straight sword in a rusty scabbard. In front of the high-peaked saddle each rider bestrode, was doubled a cloak; while behind there rose a pile of mantas and horse-cloths nearly reaching to their shoulders. Such is the style in which these men make their patrols: if benighted, they dismount and hobble their horses; the mantas are spread on the ground, and rolled in their cloaks they sleep soundly beneath the starlit sky. Away at daybreak, over sierra and dehesa, by tracks rarely trodden except by the contrabandista or brigand, they pursue their march; veiling their movements with such art as to come upon the haunts of the evil-doers at the moment when their presence is least expected. It is this independent style of acting, added to the secrecy attending their expeditions, which makes them so formidable to the robber population of the provinces; and whenever they have been extensively employed, the beneficial effects of their services have strikingly contrasted with the inefficiency of the regular troops engaged in the same vocation. The proceedings of the latter being more open to observation, could not fail to give timely warning to those against whom they were directed.

The conversation was not long in turning upon the exploits of my companions. Last year they seized three men, whose crime was horse-stealing. The robbers were drinking in a tavern in Las Navas, little suspecting the approach of the justicia, when they were surprised, bound hand and foot, and conveyed towards Constantina. The justicia, however, entertained no



thoughts of burthening that town with their support; and upon reaching a favourable spot, that is, some ravine by the wayside, they were sternly told that their moments were numbered. The criminals prayed for a priest to confess them ere they died, but that wish was refused by their captors: who observed, that those who committed murder—as they, it appears, had done—by assassination, had no right to that preparation for death they had denied to their victims. The “*cuatro tiros*” then stretched them on the ground, and their corpses were borne into Constantina on the backs of the horses they had stolen. These summary proceedings would probably be tolerated nowhere but in Spain. Here, however, in consequence of the corruption prevailing among the ministers of justice, and the facilities afforded to the escape of the worst malefactors by means of bribery or fraud, public feeling is little disposed to arraign the man who compels the law-breaker to pay on the spot the penalty of his crimes. This latitude may on the whole be conducive to the ends of justice, but it is obviously fraught with many evils; instances, indeed, are not wanting, where it has been abused to gratify revengeful passions, under the cloak of zeal for the public service.

Through a wild country we slowly journeyed till the callejuelas were reached, whereupon my escort showed more caution in their movements; they now advanced, as the proverb has it, “*la barba sobre el hombro*.” One rode on a little in front, while the other placed himself in the rear of the party, to be ready against any sudden onslaught upon that quarter. The callejuelas are so called from the nature of the road, which here, as in many parts of the country where the soil is clayey, has been so worn down by constant traffic as to

become a narrow and deep ravine between perpendicular sides. Hence it is peculiarly fitted for sudden attacks; from the nature of the ground, a traveller can receive no intimation of danger before a musket is presented at his breast, and the dreaded "Boca abajo" salutes his ears. The place, therefore, had become the subject of a local proverb, "Para robar, las callejuelas." However, nothing stirred as we wound in silence through the hollow way; and in another hour La Puebla de los Infantes came into view. La Puebla had once its castle, whose ruins crown an eminence not far distant: doubtless the village itself had its palmy days, when knights and men-at-arms had their watch on these crumbling towers; but now it seems to have survived the era to which it belonged, and only exhibits a sad spectacle of decay and poverty. Here the services of my escort terminated, and grateful men were they for the remuneration they received for the morning's ride. It was no great matter, to be sure, but then their pay was five months in arrear, for her Majesty of Spain is by no means noted for the punctual discharge of her servants' hire; and to men thus situated, such casual supplies are of no slight importance. From La Puebla the path led through olive-plantations, by a gradual descent; and, indeed, since leaving Constantina, our progress had been unceasingly down hill: at length, on rounding a high ridge, there opened upon the sight, stretching far to the left and right, the vast plain of the Guadalquivir. It was a noble prospect: as far as the eye could reach, fields of ripe grain succeeded each other without intermission, no other object breaking the yellow expanse than here and there a clump of olives. Hamlets, farm-houses, cottages, there were none; nothing to tell by whose hands was pre-

pared the scene of fertility we witnessed; so that in its unbroken loneliness there was something sad in the prospect. Hence, turning to the left, we skirted the base of the sierra as it sank into the plain, advancing along the right bank of the river, and about midday reached Pasadas.

My muleteer led the way to one of the three wretched posadas the village possesses. On entering by the open gateway, we found the caravanseraï occupied by a band of muleteers, who at this season of the year, in order to escape the scorching heat, travel by night and take their repose during the day. In all corners were piled up bales of goods, upon which they were sleeping, undisturbed by the noise and bustle that reigned in the place. As usual, the innkeeper and his household, lolling in their low chairs, took no further notice of our arrival than by staring fixedly at us; for which I speedily gave them sufficient cause, by tumbling one of the young fry from his seat and installing myself therein. An introduction being thus effected, the customary questions, as to where I was going, and from whence I came, were put, and commented on by the family after I had duly answered them; so that matters being now in a good train, I ventured to inquire if there was any apartment where I might in solitude follow the example of the sleeping muleteers around me. A closet, partitioned off from the general saloon, was pointed out as the only nook fit for such a purpose; and, moreover, the luxury of a bed was promised. Forthwith a couple of muleteers were summarily ejected from the chamber, into which they had surreptitiously crept, and in the following moment I was told that all was prepared. Little preparation, it must be confessed, was necessary; a mattress on the floor, a couple

of sheets, and a pillow, completed the arrangements here, as in the other minor towns and villages of the province. Sleep, however, shunned this tempting couch, though I courted it long. In truth, the atmosphere of my dingy cabin was like that of an oven, and would have suffocated any one who had not been well-seasoned to the intense heat of the Andalusian dog-days: even the thousand carnivorous inhabitants that harbour in a Spanish inn, to prey upon the luckless traveller, seemed to have found it too hot; all had fled, happily for me, and gone to seek some cooler clime. Unrefreshed, I rose, and wandered forth in the cool of the evening to the banks of the river. On the opposite side, a hundred feet below me, again commenced that broad level which spreads from the river till it is checked by the sierras of Moron and Estepa, and forms the plain of the Guadalquivir. But on the side on which I sat all was reversed: my position was on an elevation that rose abruptly from the river brink, and marked the extremity of an upland region which here gave place to the great plain. Many leagues to the southwards the land rose again into rugged ridges, whose march towards the south was once more cut off by a valley broader and deeper than the first: these heights were the sierras of Ronda and Granada, and the valley at their feet was filled with the tideless waters of the Mediterranean.

Within gun-shot of my post, a ferry-boat was plying on the river, conveying passengers and animals across; the exclamations of the men engaged in its operations were the only sounds that broke upon the stillness of the evening. Presently a troop of donkeys approach at a clumsy trot; and the men having espied them, make fast their bark to the bank. The labours of the



animals are at an end for the day: and each one, released from the heavy sack of grain that has probably burthened its back since daylight, is now vying with its fellows in its haste to reach home: from the tin bells attached to their necks there rises a jingling accompaniment, which seems to be enjoyed amazingly by the rabble rout. On gaining the edge of the steep slope leading down to the river, the coryphæus halts, and eyes doubtfully the slanting path by which he must scramble downwards; "Arre burro," however, urges him forward, and with cautious step and slow he descends, the rest following in single file. Just at the foot of the declivity, a *mauvais pas* lies before him. The path, besides being more precipitous than anywhere else, is slippery and wet from the wash of the stream; and at the bottom the side of the boat rises with an ugly look, and threatens to fracture his limbs should a false step occur on the treacherous slope. The poor brute feels himself to be in a dilemma, and looks wistfully to the right and left, but there is no help for him; accordingly, "Haciendo de tripas corazon," he plants his four feet together, slides down, slowly at first, but with accelerated speed as he descends. He reaches the boat, and seems on the point of being shot under the keel, when, rising nimbly, he clears the gunwale in the style of a hunter, and lands safely in the interior. The others imitate his movements with more or less success, and in due time the boat discharges its four-footed freight on the opposite shore. Then once more they set off, jostling each other in their hurry, and sending forth from their bells a din that is heard long after they themselves have vanished from sight beneath the deepening shades. The Spanish ass, however, is a very different animal



from his English brother. Here he is no longer the stunted and diminutive starveling one has been accustomed to see, but a much larger and more powerful beast, and evidently at home in the warmer climate of the South. From that circumstance he derives a share of animal spirits very much at variance with our notions upon that point. A lively donkey seems to us an impossibility; nevertheless, there are many such to be found in this land of contradiction.

Before daylight I was summoned forth by Ximenes, who had everything prepared for our departure. Upon emerging from my den, a curious scene presented itself: the space in front was covered with sleeping figures, among whom I had some difficulty in picking my steps. Their couches consisted merely of a manta or mat spread upon the sharp points of the flinty pavement, and upon this they were sleeping more soundly than many a lover of ease on his bed of down. In one corner lay the infant daughters of my host, clasped in each other's arms; and by their side another form, rolled in a sheet, which I presumed was their mother. Neither she nor the other recumbent members of the household unclosed an eye, though our steeds clattered noisily over the threshold; and without a word we passed into the street. The change from the stifling atmosphere of the inn to the cool morning air was as refreshing as the cup of water to the parched wayfarer; my spirits rose as I inhaled the fresh breeze that came down from the sierras; every muscle seemed new-strung, and I felt myself equal to a much longer journey than was in prospect for me that day. Our road continued for a league or more through a rugged portion of the sierra; the river being on the right hand, and sometimes coming into view. After

crossing numberless brooks we descended by a broken path to the larger stream of the Guadiato. It was spanned by a bridge, which the movilizados had applied to other uses than those contemplated by its founders: over the low parapets they had lately precipitated a robber whom they had caught, and deemed unworthy of expiating his crimes by the "cuatro tiros." From the scene of this extempore execution, a short ride brought us to the castle of Almodovar, whose square towers had been visible from a great distance. Nothing could be more suggestive of strength than the aspect of this fortress, perched on the summit of a singular peak that terminates a low spur running out into the plain. Crowning, as it did, the summit of an isolated pinnacle, it looked, even in its ruins, the image of a robber castle, the lord of which might with impunity exact contributions from the passing traveller, or scour the plain at the head of his vassals. In the time of the Moors its reputation was high as a place of strength. Hither one of the petty tyrants who lorded it over a fragment of the once united and powerful Moorish kingdom—Aben Mohamed, chief of Baeza, directed his flight, in the hope of braving behind its walls the wrath of his subjects, which had been aroused by the surrender of many castles into the hands of their arch-enemy, the sainted King Ferdinand; but being hotly pursued, he was overtaken, and his head struck from his shoulders.

At a later period it was the prison of Doña Juana de Lara, suzerain of Biscay, whom Peter the Cruel deprived of her liberty, and some time afterwards, although she was his sister-in-law, put to death in Seville. By the same ferocious king were deposited here the royal treasures; and, in a word, it was used as

a prison and a stronghold, but more frequently in the former capacity, during some of the most stormy periods of Spanish history. At length, on the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, strife was banished from the land, and since that period its name has disappeared from the page of history.

Thenceforward we pursued our way along a dusky track which crossed the plain in a direct line for Cordova; and on gaining a slight eminence, the spires and domes of the city were descried rising from amid a dark belt of trees that hid its walls from view. As we approached the ancient capital of Andalucia, I looked around for some traces of the magnificent summer palace which was erected on this side of the city by Abderahman the Third, and was celebrated as a miracle of Moorish art and splendour. It was beyond reason to expect a vestige of the perishable adornments of that retreat—of its spacious gardens, diversified with every rare flower and tree—its laurel and myrtle groves and numerous fountains; but surely a relic might be visible of its halls, its mosque, pavilion, and artificial mount, from which the monarch was wont to contemplate the distant city and the beauties of the surrounding landscape. Where, too, were the four thousand three hundred elaborately wrought pillars that entered into the construction of this abode of luxury? Alas! of these, as of the marble so prodigally lavished as to be employed in paving the stables, not a memorial remained; and but for the testimony of historians, it would be hard to believe that Medina Azahara ever rose from the ground and covered a wide space with sumptuous edifices.

Making a circuit, during which we traversed the deserted Alameda, and moved under the shadow of

the sunburnt walls of the city, we entered by one of its gates, having passed several others which Spanish laziness or jealousy had walled up. After undergoing the necessary scrutiny from the custom-house officials, we wended our way through silent streets to the Fonda, which I found to be one of the best I had yet encountered in Andalucia. Here my compact with Ximenes terminated; and as that personage now disappears from the scene, I dismiss him with the remark, that nature had selected him to act on this world's stage the part of those walking gentlemen who come on and go off with small accompaniment of speech. For an Andalusian and an arriero, he was as reserved and uncommunicative as any I ever met; what he did say, moreover, was couched in such thick and guttural tones, as rendered his language as unintelligible to myself as it was to the idlers of Cordova, to whom he addressed himself for information regarding the proper pilotage to the hotel. Such being the colloquial powers of my companion, I was not sorry when the clipped Castilian of a Cordovese waiter put an end to the silent meditations in which I had perforce indulged for the best part of the preceding forty-eight hours.

## CHAPTER XI.

CAPABILITIES OF THE SIERRAS I TRAVERSED.—PHILIP THE SECOND HAD TAKEN THE SAME ROUTE.—CORDOVA.—THE MOSQUE.—ITS HISTORY.—DULNESS OF CORDOVA.—ITS FORMER GREATNESS.—SPANISH DOCTORS.—THE DREADFUL SECRET.—DEPART FOR ALMADEN DEL AZOGUE.—VILLAHARTA.—THE SUSPICIOUS SECRETARY.—MY ESCORT.—SANTA EUFEMIA.—MILITARY PRECAUTIONS.—ALMADEN.—FLINTER.—HIS GALLANT DEFENCE OF THE TOWN, AND SUBSEQUENT FATE.—THE MINE.—PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF THE MERCURIAL VAPOUR.—ANTIQUITY OF THE MINE.—RETURN TO CORDOVA.—THE SUN-HATING ALFEREZ.

As my mule paced slowly along the rugged tracks I have just described, I caught myself more than once speculating upon the capabilities of the mountain region they traversed. Every step disclosed the traces of neglected advantages and resources undeveloped; and beholding these I revolved in my mind all the wonders that might be wrought by directing thitherwards the march of improvement under a wise and enlightened government; how much might be done to draw forth the natural riches of the soil, and to call into activity the energies of its population, at present repressed by the deadening influence of legislative measures, of which the least that one can say is, that they are conceived in the worst spirit of the dark ages. Let there be an end to the prohibitive code that serves only to fill the custom-houses with corrupt officials, and the land with lawless contrabandistas. Let the agricultural and mine-



ral wealth of the country rise to its proper place among the national resources, for in this lies its real strength : for that end, let the facilities of transport be multiplied, and a prospect afforded to the agriculturist and the miner, that the products of their labours shall be no longer valueless from want of access to the nearest markets.

How much might be effected by good roads ! As I pictured to myself broad and practicable highways penetrating among those valleys where the mule with difficulty maintains its footing, I beheld in my mind's eye a magical change come over their untilled slopes ; the wild lavender and gum cistus supplanted by fields and pastures extending up their sides ; each mine of copper, iron, and lead, in full operation, and yielding employment to a numerous population ; and last, though not least, the vintages of these mountains, all of which are highly palatable, and some rivalling in flavour and delicacy those of the Rhine, descending towards the coast in goodly casks, similar to those that every day of the year may be seen on the road between Xeres and its seaport. All these visions might come to pass—but when ? Not until there be swept away the thick cloud of ignorance, prejudice, and self-satisfaction, which yet overshadows the land ; nor until its people and rulers awake to the conviction, that by practical measures of improvement, and by a liberal commercial policy, will they recall the greatness their forefathers lost to themselves and their descendants by a grasping, narrow, and monopolizing spirit. Such a conviction will, in Spain, be the slow growth of years, perhaps ages.

It would have given an additional interest to the route I selected, had I known at the time that a monarch and all his court had in other days made it the

scene of a royal progress. When the last rebellion of the Moors was at its height among the inaccessible regions of the Alpuxaras, Philip the Second resolved to take up his residence in Cordova, in order to be nearer the seat of war. With this object he departed from Madrid, not by the usual road across the Sierra Morena, but by the circuitous and little trodden track through Constantina, Cazalla, and Almodovar del Rio. The chroniclers of the time say little in regard to the events of his journey through the mountains, but reserve their powers to describe his entrance into the city, and the fêtes that awaited him there. The gate by which he entered was hung with cloth of gold; the streets through which the procession advanced were shaded with awnings; and from the balconies and windows floated hangings of crimson and other colours—a custom still to be witnessed in Spain upon festival days. Surrounded by his courtiers, the King rode slowly on, attired as was his custom in black—a colour that corresponded well with his dark and sombre character—and reached the Corredera or great square of the city. Here he was observed to lift up his eyes from the ground and attentively survey the square, its proportions and long lines of windows on each side—a thing, say they, no one had ever seen him do before. From thence his majesty proceeded to the cathedral, where he heard mass, and with this solemnity concluded his first appearance in state before his faithful Cordovese. A few days subsequently another procession wound through the streets to the church of San Aciselo and San Victoria—two saints and martyrs whose names figure among the illustrious obscure of the Romish calendar. Upon reaching the gate, the devout monarch threw himself from his horse and crawled upon his

knees to the place of their interment, the whole crowd of courtiers and attendants dutifully following their master's example. But enough of this strange compound of fanaticism and magnificence.

"Conduct me to the 'Catedral,'" I said to the cicerone supplied by the fonda, a slender stripling encased in scarlet inexpressibles and a "caleseros," an embroidered jacket, and whose sole qualification for his office was an inordinate propensity to talk, but not to the purpose.

"The Catredal!" he exclaimed in his Cordovese patois; "you mean la Mesquita."

"Yes, the mosque," I rejoined; and accordingly we entered a gloomy labyrinth of narrow streets, scarcely a fathom wide, and still narrower alleys, from the bottom of which all that we discerned of the heavens was a slender streak of blue.

"Very narrow is this street," said my loquacious attendant, stopping short in one through which we were passing, and touching with his hands the walls on either side of him; "very narrow, but the calle Besa Mozas is worse than this!"

"Besa Mozas!"\* I repeated; "that is a very strange name for a street. How did it originate!"

"Why, the street is so very, very narrow, that two people cannot pass without jostling each other, even if they turn sideways; and therefore it may happen, if you meet a señorita, that——" Here he paused, and the rest of his information was conveyed by a pantomime descriptive of a figure with its back to the wall, but inclining the head forwards and imprinting a salute upon an imaginary pair of lips.

At length we reached a spot where a segment of the

\* Kiss girls.

sky might be discerned ; for nothing but a high wall, supported by massive buttresses, was before us. I then followed my conductor beneath a horse-shoe arch in the supposed wall, and suddenly found myself standing on the threshold of the most singular of Christian temples. Looking straight before me, I beheld an assemblage of slender pillars that rose in countless numbers from the pavement, and formed a throng amid which no definite object was visible : nothing but columns confusedly intermingled caught the eye ; those in the foreground standing out in relief, those in the distance closing in so as to perplex the vision and finally baffle its powers. All that I had heard and read of this sanctuary was completely realised : before me was literally a grove of columns, as it had been truly called ; and when a figure appeared in its depths, flitting across in the gloomy light, seen one moment and hid the next by an intervening shaft, I felt that a similar spectacle could only be witnessed within the heart of a forest. In proportion, however, as I advanced into the interior, though the illusion was still unimpaired, traces of order and architectural regularity became apparent. The columns were planted in long ranks, at measured though short distances from each other, and at the height of ten or twelve feet were spanned by Moorish arches in double tiers. Upon these rested the roof, disproportionately low considering the great dimensions of the edifice, but perhaps on that account enhancing the general effect, which, on the whole, was strange and startling. The vacant spaces between these columns form what might be termed vistas, down which the beholder may pace until he reaches at the further end some chapel or gate with which each terminates. Of these aisles, as they would elsewhere be



styled, there are twenty-nine ranging from east to west, and nineteen from north to south; the number of pillars exceeds eight hundred—a prodigious amount to be collected under the same roof; and while they are generally surmounted by Corinthian capitals, the shafts display every variety of hue and material—jasper, porphyry, and marble vying with each other in all the colours of the rainbow. I am not, however, going to borrow a page from Mr. Murray's Handbook, where, I doubt not, all these and other details are duly inserted; and I refrain therefore from touching upon the numberless objects of interest that here invite the attention of the scholar or antiquary; but it would be unpardonable to omit noticing the Zancarron, or chapel of Mohamed, the beauty of which as it now exists attracts the wondering eyes of strangers hardly less than it did those of the worshippers who once crowded into its precincts with prayers on their lips. On the southern side may be observed three compartments, conspicuous for the superior richness of their decorations and the beauty of the columns and arches that mark their limits. All that could most captivate an Oriental fancy is gathered here to adorn this “holy of holies;” the architectural embellishments are woven into a maze of convolutions indescribably fantastic, and unsurpassed in profusion by any other portion of the mosque: wherever an even surface occurs, it is overspread with arabesques that display the brightest colours—red and gold alternating with black. This is particularly to be noticed in the centre compartment, where a horse-shoe archway in the wall discloses an inner room, or rather alcove. Upon the wall are multiplied Arabic inscriptions in black and gold; and looking up, the most delicate tracery leads the eye to the roof, which is



adorned with gilding. Passing under this archway you find yourself in an oratory of an octagon shape, the roof and floor of which are of pure white marble, while arches and columns stand out from the walls. Here was deposited the Koran. Of one thing I felt assured, as I entered and felt the marble pavement hollowed under my feet—that hundreds and thousands must have passed through ere the threshold could have been worn down so deeply as it was. Nothing proclaimed the reality of the past so much as this: the gorgeous and lavish decorations in sight reminded you only of the skill and fancy of those who designed them, but here, underfoot, was a silent witness to the existence of a race of worshippers now passed away. It told that a living stream must have rolled over the spot ere it could have been channelled as it was; and not only that successive generations had come here to worship, but that they had lived and died as masters in the land. To tread upon marble from the entrance-gate to this sanctuary—to walk amid hundreds of columns of the same costly material—no professors of a tolerated creed could have done this, but only the arbiters of a nation's wealth and resources, and the sharers in its pride.

From the remains of these elaborate embellishments, some idea may be formed of the original splendour of the mosque, when not this portion alone, but the whole of the interior, was a scene of decorative art, fresh and vivid to the eye. Time, however, has destroyed and defaced wherever it was possible, and cast a sad-coloured mantle over all; and, as if this were not enough, modern innovators must needs add their quota of Vandalism. The most glaring deformity in this respect is the choir, which occupies the centre of the edifice; and

as it is not only conceived in the worst style of art, but is an outrage upon the uniformity of the general design, its presence comes to be regarded by the beholder as an intolerable intrusion in the place. In addition to this, Catholic superstition has lined the external walls with a host of minor chapels, enclosed within railings and gates; the effect of which is at once to contract the original dimensions of the edifice, and to militate against its architectural character.

The mosque was founded by Abderahman the First, in the year 786; and that monarch is said to have himself furnished the design. He intended it should excel in grandeur and magnificence the most famous in the East, and be comparable in all respects to that of the Alaksâ in the Holy Temple at Jerusalem. Such was his enthusiastic ardour for its completion, that he daily laboured in its construction for an hour; but, notwithstanding his zeal, it was reserved for his son Hixem to conclude the work. If we are to believe the Arab chroniclers who record its wonders, the structure must have been a sight dazzling the vision, with its array of marble columns, its burnished gates and varied ornaments. It was six hundred feet long, by two hundred and fifty wide, and was entered by nineteen spacious gates covered with bronze plates marvellously wrought; the chief gate was covered with plates of gold. The number of the columns was one thousand and ninety-three; and to light up this vast space for the prayer at night, four thousand seven hundred lamps were required, which annually consumed twenty-four thousand pounds of oil, and one hundred and twenty pounds' weight of aloes and amber for perfumes. The lamps of the mihrab, or secret oratory, were of gold, and of matchless workmanship and size.

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On the northern side of the mosque lies the Patio de los Naranjos, similar in its arrangements to that of Seville, though much larger: on three sides it is surrounded by Moorish colonnades; and in the centre are fountains, mingled with cypresses and orange-trees, from whence the court takes its name. Here the faithful performed their ablutions ere entering the mosque; and at one corner rises the alminar, or tower, from whence the muezzin's voice summoned them to their devotions.

Quitting this relic of the Moslem conqueror, I wandered through the city, in the expectation of finding other memorials of their sway, but was disappointed. The bridge over the Guadalquivir, though bearing traces of Moorish construction, is of Roman origin: the walls, however, studded throughout their whole circuit with square towers, are probably but little changed from the time when a Castilian host beleaguered the city, and shook them with its engines of war. Some of the towers are of large dimensions; and were, after the conquest of the city by the Christians, converted either into habitations or prisons. One of these, however, better preserved than the others, and of superior solidity, belongs to a later date than the Arab dominion; and, in reality, was built by a certain Christian hidalgo. It was erected at his expense as a punishment for having, in a moment of unfounded jealousy, murdered his wife. From this circumstance the tower was, and is, denominated "La Torre de la Mal-muerta;" that is, "the tower of the unjustly slain." Below the arch that unites it to the wall of the city, there was placed a tablet recording the name of the king who decreed this penalty, and those of the civic functionaries by whom it was carried into effect

However, in process of time the inscription became partially obliterated, though the tablet remains; and, as a mysterious interest attached itself to the structure, while the real cause of its foundation was forgotten, the popular voice wove for itself a legend respecting its origin, far more consonant to popular tastes and credulity than the matter-of-fact one I have related. The tower, it is said, was at one time the dwelling of a magician—Moorish, of course, who buried beneath its foundation the riches acquired by his compact with the evil one. It pleased him, moreover, to breathe over the spot a spell, which has the effect of concealing them from the eyes of the curious. The charm, however, shall be dissolved, when any one passing on horseback below the arch at full speed shall read the inscription, of which scarcely a vestige remains. He who shall do this is destined by the enchanter to inherit the treasure buried below.

Cordova, it must be owned, is a very dull place; the life has utterly departed from it, and to roam through its streets is like wandering among the tombs. If any one desires to know what a silent and desolate city is, let him come here; let him stray down a street, and see two or three figures at a distance vanishing round corners; let him cross a plaza, and find himself quite alone though it be midday; let him go on listening to his foot-fall till the sound strikes painfully upon his hearing; let him do this for half an hour, and he will begin to think he is treading enchanted ground, and has stumbled upon that city mentioned in the Arabian Nights, the inhabitants of which were congealed to marble. Yet it was a living city once; the Corduba of imperial Rome was the flourishing and bustling emporium of a province; it

was the birth-place of the two Senecas and Lucan. While literature thus ennobled the haunt of gain, and gave it a European reputation, the vestiges of Roman art, not yet obliterated by time, attest that its wealthy and luxurious inhabitants must have loved to beautify its streets with the best productions of architecture and sculpture. But the city unquestionably reached the zenith of its glory when, from being the centre of a provincial kingdom, it rose to be the metropolis of Spain under the Arabs. Under the Ommeyade dynasty, the founders of which combined with great administrative talents a love for literature and magnificence, there was united here the pomp and circumstance of an Oriental court with the graver attractions of schools, universities, and libraries. At the same time, in the arts and manufactures of the time, and in many branches of science, her industrious citizens long enjoyed a superiority that drew upon them the wondering eyes of barbarous Christendom. Here came the tribute of fertile provinces, and the spoils wrested by her generals and almanzors from the unsubdued mountaineers of Gallicia and the Asturias. Here also resorted the learned men of the East, to teach in her colleges, or to weave misty speculations in philosophy with her literati;\* while in her bazaars and alcaicerias might

\* It would appear from some notices to be gleaned from Arab historians, that the *conversazione* is far from being, as is generally supposed, the invention of modern society. Here is the picture of one so graphically drawn, that it is more than probable he who penned it must have been a member of the literary coterie he describes. Of Ahmed ben Said, a learned *alfaqui* or doctor of Toledo, it is related "that he was wont to assemble in his house about forty friends and literati belonging to that town and the vicinity. In the months of November, December, and



be seen merchants and traders from remote countries, exchanging their products for the ingenious labours of her artisans. For more than two centuries did she thus stand without a rival among nations in the west, unsurpassed in civilization, the useful arts, and scientific knowledge, until the Christians entered her gates, and precipitated her downfall, previously prepared by the dismemberment of the Moorish kingdom. From that period she swiftly sunk into decay, but though her prosperity departed, she still lived to be torn by internal discord.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the city was the theatre of the sanguinary dissensions which prevailed between the houses of Priego and Comares, rival branches of the more illustrious house of Cordova. While the former faction maintained themselves in the upper part of the town, holding the alcazar as their

January, they congregated in a spacious saloon, the floor of which was covered with silken and woollen carpets, with cushions of the same, while the walls were hung with tapestry and embroidered hangings; in the centre of the saloon stood a capacious stove, as high as a man, filled with burning charcoal, around which the party seated themselves at the distance each preferred. First was read the *hisbe*, or portion of the Koran, or some verses; these were made the subject of discussion: then were brought in perfumes of musk and other agreeable scents, and rose-water was sprinkled over them; lastly was served an abundant repast, consisting of kid and lamb's flesh, with divers other viands, dressed with oil, preparations of milk and butter, together with sweetmeats, fruits, and dates." — *Conde, Los Arabes en España*, Book i., chap. 93.

This description not only makes us acquainted with the literary tastes of the Arabs, among whom philosophic conversation amounted almost to a passion, but unfolds a state of social intercourse for which we are little apt to give them credit. Who

citadel, the others were lords of the axerquia, or lower town, where they too erected their strongholds and defied their opponents. Amid the animosity of the contending parties, the city did not enjoy much repose. Whenever the retainers on either side met, desperate skirmishes were sure to stain the streets with blood; and it was not until Charles V. assumed the sceptre that these feuds were suppressed, and tranquillity restored. Henceforward the city existed only in name; the Inquisition set up its gloomy tribunal, and laid a paralysing hand upon the last remnants of her strength; it kindled the fires of persecution in the Corredera; and at the same time made its presence everywhere silently felt, so that the place sank into a lethargy which has endured to the present day.

Cordova, I repeat, is a very dull town, but in saying so perhaps I malign this shadow of departed greatness;

would expect to find, as is depicted in the foregoing sketch, an elegance displayed by these men of the tenth century at their entertainments, and a knowledge of comfort to which modern society can alone furnish a parallel? How striking, at the same time, is the contrast between their intellectual pursuits, their refined hospitality and sociable reunions, and the darkness and barbarism in which Western Europe was then plunged? England in particular suffers by the comparison. It was at this very period that Alfred the Great had risen to spread knowledge through his kingdom, and for that end had searched for, but could not find in all England north of the Trent, an individual capable of teaching Latin—the language, be it remembered, of the church. A little later, and the gross and savage habits of the population are illustrated by the fact, that their Danish invaders were counted exquisites because they combed their hair once a week! What a contrast does this deplorable state of learning, civilisation, and manners present, to the attainments of the enlightened and polished Arabs!

for, in truth, I was detained here longer than I wished, and therefore may have viewed my place of durance with the jaundiced eye of a prisoner. I found myself immediately on my arrival a sufferer from illness, the consequence, I believe, of nocturnal travelling ; and not the most agreeable feature of the case was, that I deemed it advisable to consult a doctor. As the complaint, though new to me, was not unfrequent in the country, I judged it might possibly have for its cure some one of those simple remedies with which most countries are supplied in reference to their peculiar maladies. The remedy, however, of my Sangrado was much more simple than I anticipated. He desired me to abstain from wine, which I seldom tasted ; to imbibe cooling beverages, which I had been doing ever since the dog-days began ; and there his prescription ended : in short, he acted as his countrymen generally do in affairs of the most urgent moment—did nothing, but talked a great deal. Truth, however, compels me to record, that humbly as we may estimate such conduct in general, it is the most desirable at the hands of a Spanish practitioner. In fact, the state of medical skill and science here is at a very low ebb, and has advanced little, if at all, since the days of Gil Blas. The authorities and dogmas venerated in his day are far from being disowned by the modern successors of Sangrado ; and I really found, upon inspecting the libraries of two or three medical friends, that the volumes on their shelves were generally publications of the last century, with an occasional production of a later date. This treatment augurs badly for the patient who invokes their assistance ; yet, whatever we may think, it satisfies the Andalucians, who are content to be killed in the same way that their forefathers were dispatched, and

would, perhaps, rebel against a change for the better in the systems consecrated by time.

In my own case, I trusted that a few days' repose might prove the best medicine ; nor was I disappointed. In the interim, however, time hung rather heavy on my hands. In the middle of the day it was, of course, impossible to move out, on account of the heat, but the mornings and evenings, especially the former, were delicious in the extreme ; and at these hours I managed to creep about the town, though "with sober pace and slow." Sometimes I wended my way to the Alameda, outside of the walls, and, seated on one of the stone benches, watched the day declining in the west. At these times—and, indeed, at whatever hour I strolled thither—I was usually the only intruder upon the solitude of the place : it seemed to be no favourite with the Cordovese. Occasionally an antiquated coach drawn by mules decorated with jingling bells, or a single horseman upon his sleek Cordovese steed, would pass by ; but these were rare occurrences. How different from the gay Christina of Seville, where, from the first slanting rays of the sun till the close of dewy eve, a light-hearted throng is moving to and fro, and filling the air with the hum of their voices ! Seville, however, though fallen likewise, and in old age, displays the spirit of the laughing philosopher amid the wreck of her greatness, and bears her misfortunes with a cheerful air : not so this ancient capital, upon whose sullen and morose aspect a smile never rests, and which, in whatever point you view it, seems to be perpetually brooding over its altered fate. More frequently my steps turned to the churches of the city, where are to be seen some of the best specimens of the Cordovese school of painting, with which I was desirous of making



myself acquainted. After seeing the masterpieces of the Seville school, the beholder is not disposed to rank the works of the Cordovese artists very high: those of Antonio Castillo are the most numerous, and of this painter it is said that he died of chagrin on seeing the superiority of Murillo, with whom he was a fellow-pupil under the same master. Of the other painters of this school there are many good specimens to be found in the various chapels in the cathedral, particularly of the works of Cespedes and Palomino.

It was a consequence I little expected of my picture-hunting expeditions to the Cordovese churches, that I was speedily besieged with solicitations to become a purchaser of paintings, which the possessors were very willing to dispose of; they had heard I was "*muy aficionado a la pintura*," and at once jumped to the conclusion that I must be a collector. The latter supposition was altogether groundless; but how they were so well acquainted with the object of my visits to their churches, is no mystery to those who have lived any length of time in the country. The truth is, a vast deal of quiet espionage is exercised by the population of a Spanish town. Little is the stranger who saunters through one aware that he is the observed of many observers, the majority of whom are invisible to his own eyes; his movements are scanned from concealed loop-holes; his appearance, dress, and most trifling actions, noted with wondrous particularity: and when the evening reunions take place, all these facts are duly thrown into the common stock of information. From this results an amount of acquaintance with his sayings and doings which will startle him by its minuteness and accuracy, should it ever come to his knowledge. As regards myself, I had frequent occasion



to be surprised, by being reminded of circumstances which I imagined had passed without notice. Among other instances, I remember being informed by an inhabitant of a village some fifty miles from Seville, that it was my habit to walk up and down under the arcos in the Plaza San Francisco of the latter city. In rainy weather I usually did so, on account of the shelter afforded by the arcade; but this trivial circumstance, which anywhere else no one would take the trouble to remark, had attracted the attention of the neighbours, by one of whom it had been considered of such moment as to be worthy of a passage in a letter to his friend in the said village.

All this surveillance might be borne with sufficient equanimity, were it not sometimes the origin of serious annoyance. In this country it so happens, that if one does anything at variance with received opinions, it is at the risk of becoming an object of suspicion. This the traveller will speedily discover, for as the Spaniards are no travellers themselves, they cannot understand why an individual should encounter the hardships of a journey for the mere purpose of gratifying a laudable curiosity: no, no; he must have some other purpose at heart, and, of course, a sinister one. Accordingly, if he explores the ruins of some ancient fortress, it is to search for hidden treasure; if he visits a mine, it is to purchase it over the heads of the lessees; if he is seen climbing a hill in order to enjoy a fine view from the summit, it is to spy out the nakedness of the land, and indulge a malicious curiosity. And woe to him if he be detected with a notebook, scribbling notes, or taking a sketch of the surrounding landscape. This is quite enough to throw half a province into a fever of inquietude, to disturb the night's rest of the *alcaldes*

or corregidores wherever he goes, and to send a host of spies, male and female, to dog his heels with a pertinacity worthy of a better cause.

But to return to the Cordovese picture-dealers, whom no protestations would convince that I never had the remotest intention of purchasing their wares,—so much more difficult is it to get rid of a reputation than to acquire it. One day I received a pressing invitation from an inhabitant to view a picture in his possession of no ordinary merit. As the message ran—I might or might not purchase it, but at all events the favour of my company to behold this *chef-d'œuvre* was particularly requested. I went, and was admitted by an elderly female—as it subsequently appeared, the sister of the proprietor; and of whom, *en passant*, I may remark, that her hair was worn, as is invariably the custom of Spanish elderly ladies, without any attempt to conceal the snow with which the winter of life besprinkles it. The painting was, to my surprise, something above the common run. It was, if I mistake not, the production of Antonio Castillo, and represented a monk bending in prayer over a corpse that lay at his feet: the subject was solemn and saddening, and lost none of its gloomy effect from being clothed in the sombre colouring of that master. To judge, however, from the price affixed by the possessor, its worth was extravagantly overrated; and this error, which arose from ignorance more than from any other cause, is one that has now become very prevalent in Spain in regard to the value of paintings. Whatever might have been the fact in former times, when valuable works of art were, from the ignorance of the owners, obtained at sums far below their real worth, it is not so now; on the contrary, the tendency is to run into the opposite extreme, and, with equal want of

knowledge, to demand for third and fourth-rate productions such prices as show that the possessor, in framing an estimate of their merits, has consulted his imagination more than any other standard. My curiosity satisfied, I departed. I had, however, proceeded only a few paces from the door, when I heard myself called back by the peculiar "Hist," with which Spanish lips are familiar: turning round, I beheld the old lady of the house beckoning to me with an air of much mystery. With some surprise, I approached, and followed her into a small apartment, the door of which, after having looked about the "patio," lest any one might be within ear-shot, she cautiously closed. In silent wonder I had accompanied her into the room, but when she closed and bolted the door, as if under great apprehension for her own safety, I prepared myself to hear some dreadful secret.

"Senor," she whispered, "will you do me a favour?"

Had the speaker been young and fair, I should doubtless have given utterance to some rash vow, and promised compliance with her unknown behests; but wrinkles and grizzled locks are antidotes to sentiment, so, with the caution of my countrymen, I answered her question by putting another, and requested to know what the favour was.

"I am told that in England you have a liquid for dying the hair black: could you procure me some?"

It was too bad to be wound up to the highest pitch of suspense for so absurd a *denouement* as this, and at first I could not help feeling rather angry at the old lady. However, I informed her that there were such things in England, but at the same time assured her that they were of a highly deleterious nature; that if unskilfully applied, they had the effect of colouring



the hair sometimes purple or green ; and, in short, painted their dangers in such a style, that she crossed herself as she reflected on her rash wish to use them ; and at our parting, which was as cautiously conducted as that of a couple of conspirators, I left her effectually cured of her desire to be juvenile.

Of the few houses at which I was a visitor, that of the Capitan-General of the province was not the least agreeable. He himself, an officer who had grown grey in the service of his country, was well entitled to his present high rank, both from the length of his services, and from his wounds and sufferings in the South American campaigns, where he had honourably distinguished himself. Such claims, however, are little regarded amid the incessant changes of ministry which occur in Spain ; and I fear, therefore, that he, like many other trustworthy servants of their country, has been displaced to furnish a post for some needy and unscrupulous partisan of the dominant faction.

On mentioning to him, one day, that I was about to visit the quicksilver mines of Almaden, he dissuaded me from journeying thither alone, as the road was in many parts unsafe for solitary travellers, particularly as it approached the borders of La Mancha. This province was not yet cleared of the "facciosos," and straggling bands calling themselves Carlists, but who in reality were brigands, that, like Harry Wynd, fought solely for their own hand : these sometimes descended so far south as to hang about the skirts of the Sierra Morena, and infest the rout I purposed taking. In a day or two, however, a detachment of cavalry was to leave for Almaden, and would be assigned to me as an escort, should I choose to wait for its departure.

Before daybreak, then, one morning, I found myself

in the midst of a dozen lancers, moving through the dark and silent streets of Cordova towards the gate which opened upon our intended route. At that early hour it was surrounded by country people and their donkeys laden with produce, waiting with exemplary patience until the panniers had been searched by the custom-house officers—for such is the system pursued here, upon arriving at the gates of a walled town. On these occasions the traveller will behold an official rush out from some den in the vicinity and demand the keys of his trunks, the contents of which are forthwith displayed to the light of day. This manœuvre is supposed to be a check to smuggling; the rulers of the country imagining, in the simplicity of their hearts, that there is no other entrance into a city except by the legitimate means of access. Vaya! a Spanish contrabandista will find you out as many modes of ingress as there are streets within it.

Half an hour's ride brought us to the sierras, which we began to climb as the first streak of day appeared in the east; from the summit of the first ridge a glorious prospect burst upon the view in tracing back the road we had traversed. In the clear light of the morning sun, objects revealed themselves in the greatest distinctness, and distances appeared to be shortened; the city shook off for the time its aspect of hoar antiquity, as it seemed to feel the enlivening influence of the hour; we could see along the plain further than usual, and at the furthest limits of the immense expanse could distinctly discern how its boundary chain of mountains wound round it—how the uneven line of their summits was sometimes broken by gaps; and could mark the existence of forests by the dark spots that covered their sides. It is only at such an hour that the eye is enabled



to pierce far into space ; the atmosphere is then as unclouded to the eye as it is fresh and exhilarating to the senses. Later in the day, when the moisture is drawn up from the soil by the heat of the sun, a hazy vapour clothes the landscape ; and its features then appear to the beholder as if a veil of gauze were flung over them, beneath which lesser objects disappear to the vision, while the salient points are revealed in misty indistinctness.

From that hour until the termination of the day's march our progress was a series of "ups and downs," among a succession of low ridges, varied by our passing through a solitary pine-wood, and an occasional scramble along the dry bed of a torrent. Everywhere the surface was destitute of cultivation, the wild lavender and cistus contending for possession of the soil ; and with the exception of a solitary venta, we descried no habitation in this inhospitable waste before we came to a halt for the day at Villaharta. Unpromising enough this miserable collection of hovels appeared, as regarded its powers of entertainment for a wayfarer ; but my fears on that score were agreeably dissipated when I was conducted to a clean looking cottage, which I was told to consider as my lodging for the night. All this was the consequence of a certain missive delivered to me by the alcalde, wherein the mistress of the house was commanded to furnish me with house-room ; in short, I received my billet like the rest of the soldiers : and when I contrasted the perfections of my apartment, humble as it was, with the accommodations of the posada, the lower story of which was littered ankle-deep with filth, I found myself drawing conclusions much to the advantage of a soldier's lot as compared with that of a gentleman traveller.

In the evening I was honoured with a visit from the secretary of the ayuntamiento, who called to proffer to the English stranger all the civilities in his power, and at the same time to extract from that personage his motives and purpose in travelling through the district. I fairly staggered him by telling him the simple truth, that I was travelling for pleasure and information. The village scrivener, with the cunning air of a man who knew the world and its ways better, and could read the heart of man, quietly shook his head at this. It was impossible ! why, the alcalde and he had never done such a thing in their lives; nobody ever travelled for pleasure. "No, no," he concluded, "usted tendrá algun otro objeto." (You must have some other object.) This difference of opinion, however, did not prevent us from strolling out together beyond the outskirts of the village, and wandering among groves of evergreen oak and fields of corn, while he pointed out, with no small pride, some of the natural wonders of his native place. We scrambled down a steep bank to a mineral spring, the waters of which he assured me were of unrivalled efficacy in all manner of complaints. Be that as it may, they were acidulated and sparkling, and by no means unpleasant to the taste, and elsewhere would probably have conjured up a spa in their vicinity. Then I was led to inspect a shapeless mass of bricks, and called upon to declare what that might be. I confessed my ignorance, and was informed that these were the remains of a furnace which he himself had caused to be constructed, in order to smelt some iron ore, of which there was abundance in the neighbourhood: the heat, however, had demolished the bricks, in place of reducing the ore to metal, and so the attempt proved unsuccessful. It was true that bricks of fire-

clay, just the kind he wanted, were made in England, but then the duty imposed upon them by his government amounted almost to a prohibition; and none were of course to be procured in his own country; in consequence he was compelled to give up the attempt. In conversing with this village authority, I could not fail to be struck with his propensity to indulge in fine sounding expressions and *sesquipedalia verba*—a very common predilection among half-educated people. Perhaps in this he was not so much to blame, for the tendency of modern Spanish authors is to forsake the “pure well undefiled” of their forefathers’ Castilian, and to adopt the style of diction I heard rolling from his lips—long sonorous words, almost exclusively of Latin derivation, and from that circumstance easily comprehended by a stranger. Let the latter, however, beware of supposing, that if perfect in this latinized Spanish, he is a master of the language. On turning to the pages of Cervantes or Quevedo, he will speedily perceive his mistake, and discover before him\* a *terra incognita*, abounding in words and idiomatic phrases, which seem to belong to another tongue. Hence results the extreme copiousness of the language—its chief difficulty to a learner—and the fluency of speech that characterizes most Spaniards: a well informed native is at no loss to clothe the same idea in a dozen different shapes, and there are few things which cannot be expressed by two or three terms.

My couch was a thin mattress spread upon a huge chest, about six feet long by three broad—the depôt, I imagined, of the family wardrobe, and the sole piece of furniture in the chamber I occupied. I slept soundly, however, and before daybreak was on the march along with my fellow-horsemen. The nature of this day’s

journey was almost an exact counterpart of yesterday's. It carried us across round-backed ridges, divided from each other by deep vales, down which led rugged and dangerous descents: before noon, however, we reached the capital of the district, Pozoblanco, a large village substantially built of stone. Here the route of my escort terminated, and I parted from them with regret, I knew, however, that the comandante was instructed to supply their places with others; and on presenting to him my letter of introduction, he received me very cordially, and promised to send on another party with me; at the same time it was agreed, in order to reach Santa Eufemia by nightfall, that I should be in readiness to start at four o'clock. At that hour my promised escort rode up, and I was agreeably surprised to see it consist of my companions of the morning: they had received orders to accompany me further; and as they were my comrades during a march of a hundred miles, I shall here describe them.

Their cabo, or head, was a sargento mayor, by name Manuel Dias, a smart young fellow of prepossessing appearance. Manuel was far superior in many respects to the generality of non-commissioned officers in our own service. That, like them, he understood his duties, I could well believe, for he had risen from the ranks, having originally served in the infantry, and obtained his promotion to the cavalry as a reward for the intelligence and good conduct he displayed in the former service. At the same time his manners were characterised by the grave politeness and scrupulous adherence to courteous phraseology which mark the genuine son of Spain; his language was polished, and frequently surprised me by its elegance; indeed, I rather imagine he had made it his study to express himself in choice



phrases, for I had met few of his superiors either in birth or rank who surpassed him upon this point. Besides this, he could touch with the hand of a proficient, his country's national instrument, the guitar; could accompany it with an Andalusian or Gitano ditty, if need be; and so, taking all these things into consideration, and moreover seeing that he was the possessor of a pair of sparkling black eyes, I doubted not he was somewhat of a favourite with the fair sex.

With regard to the others, my impressions were less favourable; their bearing was anything but military, and especially wanted that upright carriage which everywhere distinguishes the soldier. That they were less trim as respects the outward man than they might have been, was possibly less their fault than that of the authorities; for, while their uniform ought to have been white trowsers, green jackets faced with red, and chakos to match, some two or three sported their winter pantaloons of light blue; and altogether their garments bore the signs of two or three years' hard service. This arose from the faulty arrangements of the government, or more probably from the poverty of its exchequer; so that between these two causes it usually happened, as I was told by the men, that their summer clothing was served out to them about the end of autumn, and that of winter some time about the beginning of summer—*cosas de España!* Their pay was what we should consider very little, and, after deductions, left only about three farthings per diem at their own disposal; out of this, moreover, they had to provide needles and thread, and other trifling necessities for upholding their well-worn habiliments—which, by the way, displayed more gaping wounds than was seemly to the eye; *au reste*, they were a merry, light-hearted set, always en-



livening the road with a song or jest, and the best of companions on a dreary journey.

In the vicinity of Pozoblanco the soil was carefully cultivated, and divided into fields by stone walls. Among these we pursued our way to Torremilan, apparently a very ancient village; and two hours further of a moonlight ride brought us to Santa Eufemia, our halting-place for the night. This also, like the other villages we passed, bore the marks of great antiquity, and was besides surrounded by a crumbling wall, which perhaps had been raised by Moorish hands.

While waiting for my billet in the midst of the escort, I could not help remarking that the elegant diversion termed "chaffing" was not peculiar to the regions of Cockayne. My escort freely indulged in that species of wit at the expense of the inhabitants, whom our arrival had brought out of their houses, and who now surrounded us, surveying in silence our appearance and movements.

"Ola! tio," cried one to an aged villager, "do many ships arrive at this great seaport of yours?" "And, old fellow," said another, "what's the price of cod-fish here?" "Ten cuidado," cried a third to a barefooted damsel tripping past; "take care and don't damage your shoes." These and similar witticisms were received with abundant laughter by the troopers; but what reply they met with from the parties victimised, may be easily imagined by those acquainted with the slang vocabulary of Spain, and its richness in expletives neither decorous nor flattering.

Next morning we were, as usual, astir at an early hour, and looking up, as we left the town, at its ancient castle, which occupies the rocky summit of an insulated peak apart from the town. Gray and wind-beaten as

it appeared, it was still in a habitable, if not defensible state, and was once, I believe, occupied by the Carlists during the war. From this circumstance the reader will be apprised that we had now entered a "debatable land," wherein the Constitutional Queen and her dreaded enemies had come to blows. The storm, however, had long blown over, but still anything but a settled calm rested upon the place of contention. I was not surprised, therefore, to see our gallant cabo display more of the precautions of war than he had hitherto deemed necessary, and send on a couple of men in front to act as an advanced guard. Seeing this manœuvre, which suggested the possibility of a skirmish, in which, of course, every one shifts for himself, I surveyed my own means of defence, and regretted to find they were incapable of sustaining a well-planned attack. Pocket pistols I carried, it is true, but they were toys rather than deadly implements; my only resource was a geological hammer, which, though not equal to the weapon of Thor, I trusted would be sufficiently tough to "knock off a specimen" from the heads of those rebellious subjects of her Majesty of Spain who might come within its swing.

About a league from Santa Eufemia, after crossing a shallow stream, whose waters a long way to the westward mingle with those of the Guadiana, the country assumed a more level appearance: here, for the first time on our journey, the semblance of a decent road was observable. I need scarcely remind the reader, that hitherto our road had been one of the rugged bridle-paths of the sierras, upon which any pace beyond a slow walk was utterly impracticable: now it enabled us to push on with quicker steps, and led along the banks of a sluggish stream, which at

one point appeared to have forced a passage for itself through a wall of rock that crossed its channel. From this point Almaden came into view, situated on the summit of a ridge, in the centre of others that rose to a considerable height; and before noon I was established in its wretched inn, stretched on a mattress, and suffering from a return of the malady by which I had been attacked in Cordova. As a matter of little importance to the reader, I shall pass over in silence the hours I lay in a deplorable state of exhaustion; I should be sorry, however, that the unremitting kindness of the hostess passed without record: it was she who attended me with as much watchful care as if I had been a near relative; and when it occurred to me that tea might prove a restorative, she caused the whole town to be ransacked for that article, and on the search being fruitless, by a happy thought applied to the apothecary, among whose stores half an ounce was at length discovered. This produced a reddish infusion, which resembled tea as much as Monmouth does Macedon, and suggested many doubts as to the genuineness of the apothecary's stock in trade in other medicines as well as this. However, whether it was owing to this or the few hours' repose I know not, but at nightfall I found myself sufficiently recovered to sally forth and inspect the town.

Upon passing by the fortifications in the forenoon, I had been struck by the rudeness of their construction, although apparently the work of no distant date; and I now learnt that these were the defences hastily thrown up by Flinter, to repel the Carlist force under Gomez. The breaches effected on that occasion still remained unrepaired, and were probably allowed to continue in that state, as from the commanding posi-

tion of the surrounding heights the place was altogether indefensible, and walls would afford no protection to its buildings. Flinter, however, made a gallant defence, and only capitulated in order to save the town the horrors of an assault, which he foresaw was inevitable, and, from the weakness of the garrison, too certain to prove successful. This was not the first time I had become acquainted with the name of Flinter; and all I heard in connexion with it had inclined me to take more than an ordinary interest in the fortunes and fate of that daring adventurer. An Irishman, I believe, by birth, he had served the cause of Spain in Mexico with distinguished gallantry; and on the breaking out of the Carlist war, joined the ranks of the Constitutional army. On the soil of Spain he added to his well-earned reputation by his defence of this town, on the occasion of the "raid of Gomez" through Andalucia, notwithstanding that he and his garrison were finally compelled to surrender to superior numbers. As a prisoner, his rank did not exempt him from the hardships and cruelties under which the majority of his followers sank. I had conversed with those in Cazalla and Constantina who had witnessed the undaunted bearing with which he met them; they had seen him marching on foot, divested of every article of clothing but a tattered cloak, yet preserving his characteristic cheerfulness amid these indignities and the perils of his position. Dangerous, indeed, it was, for to become incapable of keeping pace with the Carlist force was tantamount to certain death; the unfortunate wretch whose strength failed him, and lagged behind, was shot without compunction. In this way perished many prisoners, chiefly young men dragged from their homes on account of the principles



they espoused, and from the nature of their pursuits unfit for the fatigues of the long marches by which Gomez traversed Andalucia. Flinter, however, survived these horrors, and subsequently succeeded in effecting his escape from a Carlist prison. As a reward for his services, the province of La Mancha, in which Almaden is situated, was placed under his command, but with means at his disposal so imperfect as to seem almost a mockery of authority. This, however, did not damp his energies; with six hundred men—all he could collect—he made a rapid night march; surprised and utterly routed the forces of one of the Carlist leaders—if I mistake not, those of Basilio—though triple his own in numerical amount; and for a time the province was cleared of its enemies. These successes were, however, received with no goodwill by the government of the day. Impediments were accordingly thrown in his way; his plans thwarted; supplies denied; till at length his pride was wounded, and having thrown up his command, he repaired to the court to state his wrongs and obtain redress. Here fresh mortifications awaited him; and no longer able to endure them, in a moment of excitement he terminated his existence.

Brave and talented as Flinter was, it is not to be denied that he possessed faults which may have militated against his prospects. The most conspicuous was a propensity to self-laudation—a venial sin, one would think, in Spain, where nothing is so common; but which, nevertheless, must have aroused more hostility to himself and his measures, than the most scandalous abuse of his high authority. Tolerant as Spaniards are of gasconade among their countrymen, they resent as a dire offence the same failing in others: for a stranger



to boast of his deeds of daring, is to administer to themselves a rebuke which stirs up the worst feelings of their nature, because it points to their own do-nothing style of performances, and forces disagreeable comparisons upon their thoughts. Hence the man who is in the habit of doing this, becomes a thorn in the side of their pride and vanity; and while these, the strongest passions of the nation, are wounded, his past services and real worth are cast out of sight. Nothing, therefore, could have been more imprudent in Flinter than to publish, on the occasion of his resigning his command, the following statement, which at once paints the character of the man, and explains the cause of his subsequent treatment from the government he served: "To-morrow I repair to Court, since Her Majesty has accepted my resignation. I have saved these mines (Almaden) and eight millions of reals in quicksilver, which I despatched to Seville; and I leave behind me fortified an impregnable position. Thanks to God, I quit La Mancha with honour, and without having sanctioned or enforced a single exaction from any town. These are the acts, these are the sentiments of Flinter: let the country and the government judge."

A wiser man than Flinter would have spoken "with bated breath and whispered humbleness" of these achievements, which certainly were far from common at the period he wrote: a more astute mind would have concealed its part in them, and in flaming language assigned the credit to the patriotism, the zeal, the heroic exertions—in a word, to the lofty virtues, of which the government was as devoid as its treasury was of funds; and the reward might have been a pardon for past successes, his continuance in his post, and perhaps some modicum of assistance lent him. In no

other way could he have obtained from the administration that favour which honour, duty, and interest, equally commanded them to show to a faithful, worthy, and able subordinate. Such are the ways of Spain !

In the western side of the town, and at the foot of the ridge on which it is situated, is the entrance to the mine. The sargento bore me company as I descended to the gateway, and was as impatient as myself to gratify a laudable curiosity ; but for the time it was doomed to be disappointed. No one was permitted to enter without an order from the mining authorities ; and that, after some trouble, was obtained, but with the intimation that for that day I was too late, and must present myself the following morning at six when a sub-director would be in attendance to conduct me through the interior. While this important matter was being arranged, I had ample leisure to note how dire were the effects of the mercurial vapour upon those who laboured in the mine. There was not a man that passed me who did not more or less bear the marks of its noxious influence. All were characterised by a death-like pallor, from which the youngest and most robust were not exempt. The aspect of these, from the conjunction of their muscular and rounded limbs with the countenances of spectres, was singularly strange. There were others, however, into whom the subtle poison had entered deeper : some were partially paralytic, and walked with a tottering gait ; many were affected with a constant tremor, which was distinctly perceptible ; and others again had lost either their teeth or an eye, and one or two an arm.

The most striking phenomenon, however, was the change wrought upon the eyes of all. The dark, speaking eye of Spain was no longer to be seen, but

in its place you beheld a lack-lustre orb, coloured of a bluish tinge, and giving to its owner the blank stare of idiotcy. This, however, was only the expression of their countenances when at rest, for they are by no means deficient in intelligence, as I found on engaging in conversation with some of them. These men seldom work longer than six hours at a time in the mine; and a few, who study their health, pass only every other day below; yet the utmost care cannot prevent the searching vapour from penetrating the system, and producing the pitiable effects I witnessed. The wages of the miners average twenty-pence a-day; and, inconsiderable as we should reckon this as a recompense for the certain loss of health the labour entails, employment is nevertheless eagerly embraced by the townspeople and those of the neighbourhood. It must be remembered, however, that these are high wages in Andalusia, where the gains of a labourer seldom exceed a shilling a-day.

As usually happens when men are engaged in a hazardous calling, no one thinks of the morrow, or of realising from his savings a provision which may release him, ere it be too late, from his connexion with the mine. The principle of a short life and a merry one is the rule of conduct here, and every peseta is in consequence dissipated as fast as it is acquired. There are few who do not, according to the notions of the country, fare sumptuously every day. While the jornalero of the soil is satisfied with his frugal repasts of gaspachos, garlic, bread, and melon, his fellow-labourer in the bowels of the earth indulges in dainties and luxuries, such as fowl and flesh, generous wine, lemonade, and so forth. The one, however, lives to a good old age; but the other consumes a few years in thus struggling



against his fate, and finally dies young; or lingers on broken in constitution and prematurely decayed.

The following morning, the first object of interest I viewed was the apparatus for extracting the mercury from the rough ore. This consists of a range of furnaces, in which the ore is exposed to the action of fire; and in connexion with these are certain tubes through which the vapour from the mineral passes into chambers, where it condenses, and assumes the shape of quicksilver. A reservoir, fashioned out of stone, is attached to each chamber, to receive the liquid as it trickles from the walls, or rolls in globules on the floor. This is the ancient method of obtaining the mercury. The more modern differs from it, in the vapour being conducted through pipes of burnt clay, whose purpose is similar to that of the worm in distillation, for the vapour is condensed as it passes through them, and deposits the quicksilver in the reservoirs without going through an intermediate chamber. Here, as in other parts of Andalusia, the scarcity of fuel must be a great bar to the operations of calcining and smelting; no other material is to be procured but brushwood, which, besides being incapable of a steady heat, must be brought from a considerable distance, and is, in consequence, both scarce and expensive. As soon as the quicksilver is formed, it is collected from the reservoirs and placed at the general dépôt, in large troughs hollowed out of stone; from hence it is dispatched in iron jars to Seville, there to be exported to various parts of the world.

Entering the mine by a doorway, over which was placed an image of the Virgin, we passed into a long gallery, at the termination of which the descent commenced. It was by no means perilous, though some-

what fatiguing, and was effected by a series of ladders, furnished with landing-places at short distances : one or two galleries we traversed, again descended some dozens of ladders, and at length reached the lowest deeps, where the miners were at work. The depth we had now reached was said to be 900 feet from the surface, and I am inclined to consider this statement as not very wide from the truth, from calculating the numbers and height of the ladders by which we descended. The scene into which we penetrated differed little from those that usually occur in the interior of mines. Men were employed, by the light of feeble lamps, in various processes ; some were hammering, others driving bores, working pumps, or conveying the mineral to the bottom of the shaft, from whence it is drawn up to the surface in buckets. The vein of cinnabar upon which they were engaged appeared to be peculiarly rich ; from every crevice beads of pure mercury might be seen exuding, and on breaking a fragment, it was found to be studded with minute globules, which were disseminated through the mass, and testified how the larger drops were formed.

This mine is, perhaps, the most ancient of which we have record. Theophrastus, who lived 300 years before Christ, speaks of the cinnabar of Spain ; and Vitruvius, a contemporary of Augustus, makes similar mention of it. Pliny describes it as being situated in the province of Bætica, as in truth it is, though, in the modern division of Spain, Almaden is the last village of La Mancha, and is only separated from the province of Cordova by a rivulet. By the Romans free use was made of the cinnabar, although they considered the mercury to be poisonous. The Roman matrons employed it to rouge their cheeks, while to their



painters it was no less useful in furnishing vermilion. Pliny moreover informs us that the mine was closed, and sealed up with the greatest care, and opened only to allow a certain quantity to be extracted. During the dominion of the Moors little is known of its history, and it is probable that the state of manufactures and commerce in Europe for many ages subsequent to their expulsion would prevent it from being an object of interest; but in the year 1525 the demand for its produce appears to have been very considerable. In that year the two brothers, Marcos and Cristoval Fuggars, rented the mine, under an obligation to extract annually 4000 quintals, which were to be purchased by the government at prices varying according to circumstances. This contract continued in force with these lessees, or their descendants, until 1645, when they abandoned both it and one by which they held the silver mine of Guadalcanal.\* At present the produce exceeds 20,000 quintals, and the revenue yielded thereby averages about 300,000*l.* per annum.

A wearisome ascent it was to the light of day, and many were the pauses and halts demanded by our

\* The brothers Fuggars were the Rothschilds of their day; and, in truth, there is a singular resemblance in their career to that of the colossal capitalists of modern times. They were natives of Germany, as was the father of the present Rothschilds; were the bankers and money-lenders to the chief monarchs of Europe; and were also, as the others now are, the lessees of Almaden. From these sources they accumulated such vast wealth, that their name became synonymous with riches; and perhaps few are aware that the phrase, "A rich old *fogo*," takes its rise from these millionnaires of a former age. Their descendants, I believe, still exist in Germany, having risen, through their wealth, to the rank of nobles.

conductor the sub-director, whose laborious efforts in climbing, for which a short and rotund frame were far from favourable, I could not help regarding with a malicious satisfaction. The truth is, that the worthy sub-director was somewhat of the opinion of the village escribano in Villaharta, and could only see in my visit to the mines some ulterior purpose, which it was his duty to detect, and if possible defeat. I could not, therefore, stir without finding him close as a shadow behind me—nor address a miner without his ear being directed to catch both question and reply—nor chip off a fragment of cinnabar without his looking grave, and fancying some mysterious consequences were to follow my inspection of the mineral. All this was sufficiently provoking, and in some measure a bar to a satisfactory survey of the mine; but it was the unavoidable effect of departing from the beaten track in Spain, which no one, and especially no foreigner, can ever expect to do without subjecting himself to the most groundless suspicions.

The following hour I was on my way back to Pozoblanco, which I reached “sin novedad” that afternoon; after a few hours’ rest I proceeded with a change of escort to Villaharta, where we arrived late in the night. My lancer comrades remained behind in Pozoblanco and, as I quitted the town, I beheld the whole party in a wine-shop enjoying themselves soldier-fashion, and rejoicing over the few dollars I distributed among them. Poor fellows! such an event as the possession of silver was a rarity in their military career, and deserved commemoration in bumpers; for their pay was six months in arrear, and was doled out, though a mere trifle, at distant intervals and in small sums. As regarded the sargento, I felt some delicacy in treating him as I did

the men. His manners and deportment had all along exhibited so much of the gentleman, and his sentiments and language were so far above the station he occupied, that I could not help regarding him as in reality belonging to a class to which money could scarcely be offered without affront. I hesitated, therefore, about placing it in his hands. I fancy, however, that the trooper who acted as my servant perceived these scruples; for, without waiting to be questioned, he began to narrate how the sargento and a party had one time escorted the Archbishop of Cordova, and how the said archbishop at parting presented him with his blessing and ten dollars, and how he thanked the archbishop "mucho, mucho," for the "gratificacion." This was enough; and I duly followed the archbishop's example, save in the matter of the blessing; and the worthy sergeant went on his way rejoicing. With this worthy personage I had only one fault to find. In place of the plain "usted" by which every one in Spain is addressed, from the hidalgo down to the beggar, he deemed it befitting some exalted notions of my dignity to dub me "usia," a term corresponding to "your lordship" in England. With most people the mistake, I imagine, would be grateful to their feelings rather than otherwise; but on the present occasion, when I contrasted the outward show of the individual so addressed with the grandeur of his title, I felt inclined to tax the sargento with indulging in a piece of quiet satire at his expense. The fact was, that for a peer my turn-out was humble, if not shabby to the last degree; sombrero, jacket, and crimson worsted sash, were of the most plebeian fabric and cut, and bore unequivocal traces of plebeian hardships; his lordship's steed, moreover, was a wretched hack—the best it is true, that

could be procured in Cordova, but nevertheless so sorry a specimen of horseflesh as to be christened by the troopers "El Torero," or the bull-fighter, in allusion to the animals that appear in the bull-ring, and which are invariably the refuse of their kind. The sargento, however, on his part, seemed quite unconscious of the absurd effect of the title under such circumstances, and from first to last bated me not an inch of the scrupulous punctilio with which he used it.

His successor in command of the fresh party, though ranking higher, was in other respects far his inferior. He was an alferéz, or cornet—a junior in military honours, though a man of fifty summers: as far as I could discern, his only accomplishments were to grumble at everything and swear like a trooper. For the sun he entertained an especial aversion, and to accommodate him our marches were made by night. No sooner did the first beams of day overtake us, than he drew forth a red cotton handkerchief, in the folds of which he carefully concealed his visage. The effect of this, surmounted by a military casque, was, it may be conceived, more singular than warlike, and was a perpetual source of irritation to one's risible faculties. On the first night's march I was awakened, while dozing in the saddle, by our halting at a *venta*, the sole habitation in a forsaken land of many leagues in extent. Without delay the men proceeded to throw themselves from their horses, when "Hold!" cried our doughty leader; "there may be robbers in the *venta*, and I have known such rush out and escape, owing to the men being dismounted and unable to pursue." In obedience therefore to his orders, some remounted their horses, while the others with drawn sabres surrounded the door, looking like terriers watching the opening of a rat-trap.

At length, after a long and loud summons, the door slowly turned on its hinges, and disclosed—not desperate brigands, but the meagre form of the host, clad in a solitary garment of the shortest, and holding aloft a lamp in his hand. Further observations it was out of my power to make, for, in his affright at beholding the gleaming steel and the attitudes of the men ready to strike, the lamp slipped from his fingers, and darkness enveloped the scene and the *dramatis personæ*.

Without further incident I reached Cordova, and on the following day was on the high road to Anduxar. A parting visit was, however, due to the mosque, and for the last time I wandered among its thousand pillars in still unabated wonder of the strange scene they formed. To the last, one could not help connecting some supernatural origin with this wonderful memorial of a departed race, for in its every feature there were traces of the East—that land of dark enchantments. Sometimes it was as if I strayed in the midst of a petrified forest, whose branches, while young, had been bent by magic hands into interlacing arches and fantastic curves to intercept the light of day; or sometimes I fancied myself in one of the sacred groves of idolatry, suddenly turned into stone by the fiat of Omnipotence in order to confound its unhallowed worshippers. Everything, in truth, bespoke the place to be the holy ground of another and not a Christian people. The Crescent was everywhere engraven on its walls, and that too deeply to be effaced, even by a conqueror's hand. Despite of the vicissitudes and the lapse of ages, it was fresh to the eye in the illuminated wall, the slender shaft, the quaint arch, and the Oriental cast of which every object partook; these symbols seemed still at war



with the Cross, notwithstanding the long domination of the latter in the place.

If it were allowable to test the quality of men's religious sentiments by their places of devotion, the result would, I think, be unfavourable to the Arab builders of this temple. None bore the banner of the false prophet so far and so proudly, and none developed so highly the intellect of their race; but here, while the wish to honour their faith was abundantly manifest, they had utterly failed to give expression to a high devotional feeling. In this, the mightiest work of their hands, there were no traces of the soaring aspirations which other creeds have wrought into their sacred edifices; vastness and grandeur are wanting here; you wander through the pile astonished and bewildered, but unawed; and you leave it uninfluenced by those elevating impressions which descend even upon the believer in another faith when he visits the mighty temples of a strange people.

In other respects this mosque might be considered an image of the Arab mind. That it was subtle and ingenious, you gather in following with the eye the unending intricacies of decoration that overspread the interior, and which nevertheless betray, through their seemingly careless irregularity, a studied system of complicated arrangement. That it was painstaking and laborious, is testified by the perplexing minuteness of detail pervading every design their fancy sketched. That it was musing and speculative you cannot doubt, after having stood awhile in the twilight gloom of the building, amid its pale host of columns: after a time the whole seems to fade before the eyes into a troubled dream, peopled with shadowy forms, whose silence and rigidity are at once a mystery and

occupation to the thoughts. And, moreover, that it was ostentatious and magnificent, is proved by the hewn and shapen marble everywhere lavished, and the gold and bright colours that glitter upon wall and ceiling.

Such qualities, it is manifest, do not constitute a mind of a high order — it is deficient in boldness and grasp of thought; and this, in truth, was the characteristic of the Arab intellect. Perhaps a loftier flight was denied it by the genius of its religion, the tendency of which was to confine its range to the narrow circle of science and thought prescribed by the Koran. Yet, on the whole, its performances displayed no common ability, moving though it did under the weight of these shackles: like the kaleidoscope, it threw together its few materials into such varied combination, as to startle us by their novelty and beauty, and compel us to form a high estimate of what its powers would have been under a system more favourable to their development.

## CHAPTER XII.

ROAD TO ANDUXAR.—PLAIN OF THE GUADALQUIVER.—THE DILIGENCIA.—ANDUXAR.—THE PRIEST'S DISCOURSE.—THE WANDERING STUDENTS.—NOCTURNAL SUMMONS.—ROAD TO JAEN.—ARJONILLA.—THE VEINTICUATRO'S REVENGE.—THE ATALAYA.—VEGA OF JAEN.

AT nine o'clock of a cloudless morning a lumbering equipage, known by the imposing title of a diligence, was at the door of the fonda, waiting for its cargo of passengers who had alighted to swallow a hasty breakfast. This conveyance was the usual means of transit between Seville and Madrid, and I now availed myself of its assistance to reach Anduxar, a town upon the high road to the latter city, and distant some ten leagues from Cordova. In a few moments all squabbles and arrangements were concluded, and the vehicle being towed from its moorings by a rambling team of eight mules, began to move along the narrow and tortuous streets of Cordova, at every yard rolling heavily, like a ship in a storm. Fortunately for our safe exit into the open sea, or rather road, the foremost pair of our eight in hand was under the control of a postilion, who steered us with much judgment through streets scarcely broader than the machine itself; and in due time we emerged by the Puerta Nueva into the fair way to Madrid, where all was, comparatively speaking, plain sailing. It was pleasant to exchange the rough jolting over the street pavement, and the frowns of the

sombre town, for the smoothness of a beaten highway and glances into a wide prospect; yet a new discomfort speedily arose, hardly less annoying than those we left behind. Clouds of dust were raised by the feet of the mules, and these swept round the diligence, penetrated into every corner of the interior, and at times were so dense as completely to hide from view the postilion who rode in front. Through this muddy atmosphere, however, glimpses of the surrounding scenery were occasionally caught; from all that was disclosed, there was, however, little reason to regret that these peep-holes through our floating shroud of clay were so unfrequent. We were ascending the broad vale of the Guadalquiver, from whose banks, on either side, there rose in soft swells an undulating country just on the eve of surrendering its luxuriant harvests to the hand of the reaper. On the left, at no great distance, rose a spur of the Sierra Morena, as brown and parched as if nightly swept by volcanic fire; over its swarthy brows other ridges peered, as if straining to behold a fertility denied to their own arid and desolate slopes. On the other side, across the river, there was no obstruction to the view: the eye ranged freely over a vast expanse clothed with endless breadths of corn and wheat, varying in their tints from the brightest golden to pale yellow. It was literally a waving sea of those rich colours, that, commencing at the river's margin, rose and fell in undulations like those of the heaving ocean, and sent its golden billows far into the horizon. Yet, amid this sunny aspect, there reigned a loneliness as mournful as that of the desert; never did its bleaching sands sleep in more death-like tranquillity than did this scene of luxuriance. This is one of the characteristics of Spanish scenery. In other lands a kindly

feeling seems to exist between the soil and those who cultivate it; the husbandman's dwelling is by his vineyard, or in the midst of his fields; the shepherd lays him down by his pastures green and quiet waters; the sequestered glen has its cottage, and the chalet speaks of an attachment which mountain hardships and dangers serve but to rivet: but here, an unwonted estrangement is everywhere observable; the cultivator seems to manifest an aversion for the scene of his labours, and removes his dwelling as far as possible from it. Rich, therefore, as the plain may be, it wants all those signs of life which we are accustomed to associate with fertility of soil. There are no cottages by the wayside, nor farm-houses apart at intervals; no curling smoke marks the site of homes and hearths; no scattered hamlets crown the knolls, or lie basking on the slopes; but wide and far the eye travels over a houseless prospect, so expressive, notwithstanding its natural abundance, of solitude and abandonment, that the abode of the pestilence could not surpass it in saddening impressions.

About two leagues from Cordova the road crosses the Guadalquivir by the noble bridge of Alcolea, the work of the beneficent Carlos Tercero; and then, amid a country where plantations of olives mingled their faded green with the tints of the ripe grain, we reached the village of El Carpio. The usual spectacle of squalor and misery is presented by the collection of crumbling dwellings of which this place is composed. In the centre of these rises a tower, not of Moorish construction, as its aspect would denote, but the work of their Christian conquerors. The reader of Spanish romances must guard against supposing this to have been the home of the famous Paladin Bernardo del Carpio, the hero of many a tale and ballad; that honour belongs to



a fortress which he constructed about four leagues from Salamanca, and bears the same name as this village.

Tired of gazing upon the placid features of the valley through which the road continued, I turned to examine with some minuteness the diligence and its equipments. These, whatever might be their other merits, unquestionably possessed strong claims to originality. On a low seat in front of the coupé sat the driver, grasping in one hand sundry ropes that represented reins, and in the other wielding a stunted whip. His voice, however, was in more frequent use than the lash, and truly that tongue found no rest. From the moment of starting, a series of yells, whoops, and shouts, were poured forth in a way a Red Indian might have envied, and were employed to urge forward the team: were these ineffectual, then a few blows of the whip, smartly applied, never failed to encourage the flagging animals into a canter. But then the foremost mules, whom the lash could not reach—how are they to be stimulated? What is this? Whiz goes a pebble at one with unerring aim—and lo! the driver and his zagal are seen to be provided with bags of this ammunition, with which from time to time they assail the sleek animals, who, on their part, receive the shower with much shaking of their long ears. At the foot of a steep acclivity we found five additional mules in waiting to drag us up the ascent; these were harnessed to the others with all sorts of tackling, and being attached without the slightest attempt at method, some in front, some at the sides, or wherever fancy thought proper, the whole mass had pretty much the appearance of what in Australia is called a “mob of cattle.” This, however, was the time for our driver and his man to come forth in all their strength. While one rains a pitiless

storm of missiles, the other leaps to the ground in a half frantic state, rushes up to the mob, dashes right and left a whirlwind of blows upon their hides, hallooing and screeching at the same time with all his might. Away, then, they go up the hill at a gallop, half hid in dust, kicking out at each other and their tormentor, who runs up by their side. Behind follows our lumbering ark, pitching and heaving among the ruts, and its timbers creaking at every plunge. At the summit the auxiliaries are dismissed, the zagal mounts to his perch, breathless from his exertions; and while he refreshes himself with smoking a "papel," we resume our usual jog-trot progress. These are the active members of our force: the inactives consist of four ruffian-like personages who mount guard on the roof, each with a musket between his knees, their office being to defend the diligence against all comers in hostile guise. I fear much, however, they will prove anything but true knights in the hour of need, if there be any meaning in scowling brows and sinister looks; and they have altogether the air of men who feel by no means at their ease in an honest vocation. As it is among the "*cosas de España*" to pardon the brigands who successfully defy the law, and then employ them in services like this, the presence of these worthies is easily accounted for. My word for it, they could tell if they chose many a tale of the road, in which "*Boca abajo*" would figure conspicuously.

At Baylen the escort is doubled, previous to encountering the gloomy passes of the Sierra Morena, and the dreary steppes of La Mancha; but, notwithstanding these precautions, the diligence from Granada, which runs to meet this, had been attacked a few weeks ago by a party of robbers, who, besides plundering the

vehicle, abstracted several of the passengers, and carried them off to their mountain haunts. One of these passengers, however, who happened to be a person of some influence, managed to persuade his captors that, if they returned to an honest life, he would ensure them a pardon; and they having, probably, made enough money, accepted the terms, and are now peaceably enjoying the fruits of their robberies. Such are the ways of Spain.

The sun was setting in the prodigal beauty of the South, mantling the distant sierras in purple, and lavishing its gold upon the waters of the Guadalquivir, when we crossed that river by a noble bridge and entered the town of Anduxar. For the next hour and a half I was engaged in the absorbing occupations connected with one's arrival at a tolerable inn; there was dust to expel, supper to dispatch, mules and a muleteer to hire, before I proceeded, in company with one of the passengers in the diligence, to explore the town. Whatever charms it might possess were only partially revealed under the shade of evening; yet, with the broad river by its side, and surrounded by many gardens and orange-groves, it must in daylight become well its position as chief city of the rich plain in which it lies. Beyond this the town possesses few claims to notice, either in respect to works of art or historic recollections; the principal church is an edifice constructed in the plateresco style, an order of architecture peculiar to Spain, in which is exemplified how far bad taste may be carried. At one angle rises a square tower, similar to the Giralda of Seville; but, unlike that colossal structure, it stands apart from the church, and is apparently a monument of Moorish construction.

At this season of the year the evening hours, how-

ever unfavourable to the observation of external nature, are those which afford the best insight into the customs and manners of an Andalusian population. During the intense heat of the day each town lies in a state of suspended animation, from which only as the sun begins to sink does it waken into life. As the shadows gradually deepen, so do its languid powers revive; each house pours forth its occupants to swell the concourse on the Alameda, or, as here, to form groups, who slowly saunter up and down the principal streets; the buzz of conversation is mingled with the cries of water-sellers, or the whining accents of beggary; in every café or neveria are to be seen the citizens, with coffee-cups or ices before them; and on entering one, your ears are stunned with the fierce conflict of political argument. Presently, on passing the mouth of a by-street, you stop to listen to the drumming of a guitar, and the click of the castanets by which it is accompanied. The sounds announce a street tertulia: the old folks have brought out chairs before their doors, and sit in luxurious ease, contemplating three or four couple of mozas and their gallants, who are dancing the fandango with indefatigable zeal in the middle of the street. From this national spectacle you are diverted by hearing the quick rattle of sundry fans, and, turning round, encounter the gaze of two or three señoritas: they have detected a stranger, and now adopt this plan of attracting his attention; they are desirous of seeing his face—perhaps of being seen themselves. As they approach with the unspeakably graceful step of Andalusia, their dark eyes bend inquiring but soft glances, which steal away every thought for the time, and you experience a feeling of relief when they have passed by. Next come up the mammas, dutifully following in the



wake of their dark daughters, and keeping an eye upon the flirtations that spring up by the way. Perhaps, when the owners of these lustrous orbs pass by a second time, you muster up courage to address them in your most courteous Castilian; a few compliments are paid to the beauty of their native town, from whence there is an easy transition to some remarks upon the charms of its daughters: after this everything you say is highly applauded, and considered "muy gracioso;" and when the time for parting arrives, their "adios" and "buen viage" fall pleasantly upon the ear, and are oft remembered as your mule plods wearily along the lonely path, or when scenes of savage desolation mingle with a glowing atmosphere to harass both frame and spirit.

Perceiving the principal church to be lighted up, my companion and I entered, and found a small congregation, chiefly composed of peasantry and old women, listening with wrapt attention to a priest who was delivering a "platica" or discourse from a pulpit attached to one of the pillars. No language is, perhaps, so well fitted for a religious address as the Castilian; its sonorous accents fill the ear, and fall with impressive solemnity upon the thoughts, which insensibly bow before tones that bespeak the language of command; while its rolling diction deepens the effect of grave admonition or noble sentiment. But all this was marred by the unhappy nature of the topic upon which the padre was descanting. His subject was neither a point of doctrine, nor the praise of a cardinal virtue, but an extravagant eulogy of the Virgin Mary, accompanied with a catalogue of the marvellous powers with which she is endowed as the Mother of God and Queen of Heaven. I will spare the reader the recital of this in-



credible history, as the annals of superstition are at once painful and dull to an enlightened mind, but it was something new to learn that the power of working miracles had not yet departed from the Santissima Virgen; nay, more, that not later than last year it had been visibly exercised in the great commercial city of Barcelona. "It so happened, my hearers," continued the preacher, "that in the city of Barcelona certain students approached the door of a wicked house for the purpose of entering it: lo! as they stood, a shining light interposed between them and the threshold, and looking up they beheld the figure of the immaculate mother, '*para siempre alabado sea su nombre*,' standing in the doorway with a flaming sword in her hand. Thereupon the students fled in dismay; and perceiving in the apparition a merciful warning against their evil ways, have renounced the sins of the flesh, and led unspotted lives ever since." On hearing this, my companion, who was a Madrilenian, and made no secret of his infidel opinions, gave way to a smile of incredulity. This, unluckily, caught the eye of the pulpit orator. Immediately he changed his tone, and spoke at us with the semblance of much virtuous indignation: "What! shall abominable heretics enter to sneer at holy truths? Let them, I say—" and so forth. Under such circumstances it was neither profitable nor pleasant to remain as listeners, and, in the midst of a thundering anathema, we effected our exit from the church, unperceived by the audience; indeed, our presence there had been altogether unnoticed by any one except the preacher, as we had kept in the background, and behind the listening circle. From the gloom of the church, amid which a few lights glimmered faintly, and from the debasing themes of superstition, it was a pleasant thing to escape into the clear darkness of

an Andalusian night, and look up at its stars. They spoke of peace, truth, and purity, as they have ever done since the first night of creation; but at that moment, when the language of spiritual darkness was ringing in the ear, their words of light seemed brighter than ever, and their testimony to truth more sure. One could not long look up without feeling the tranquilizing influence of such a glorious scene: the resentful spirit in which one quitted the church was gradually stilled; the outrageous fictions one heard were remembered not with disgust but with pity for the speaker and his hearers. Who could censure, while that serene sky and its thousand worlds of light seemed to be bending in compassion over the spot?

It was, in truth, a beautiful night; one to be enjoyed best in solitude, and not, as here, among a laughing throng. But place and circumstances were against sentiment, and, to make matters worse, we stumbled upon a party of students engaged in appealing to the charity of the public by a mode known from time immemorial to that fraternity. They were poor scholars, who employed their vacation in wandering through Spain, and begging in the towns through which they passed as much as would maintain them during the ensuing term at the University. It is a custom now, I believe, peculiar to Spain alone, where customs never die; but was once common in Germany, for in this manner Luther begged through the streets of Magdeburg, and acquired the knowledge which was to shatter the powers of Romish darkness. A noisy group they formed, and made the street resound with their music. One was drumming away vigorously upon a guitar, to which he sang extempore verses: another beat time with a tamborine, while a violin squeaked in concert;

and to the fourth was delegated the important office of spokesman, for which the nimblest and wittiest tongue of the party is always selected. With his tricornio or three-cornered hat in hand, and a jest on his lips, he besets those who may pass by, or who are to be seen at the windows. Now, with his hand on his heart, he approaches a señorita, and supplicates her to remember the poor students; he of the guitar meanwhile is chanting in doggrel verse to the bystanders, how her eyes are like stars and her foot a marvel of beauty: now he darts off to an old man, and reminds him that wisdom like his must see the necessity of encouraging learning: and so he goes the round of the circle, skilfully hitting the weak points of every one who seems burthened with a purse. Of course we could not expect to escape; up he came, with a low bow, and addressed us: "*Caballeros, protectores de la literatura, es de suponer que personas de tan alta categoria como ustedes tienen en su bolsillo un durillo por los nobles estudiantes—pero no digo tanto—una pesetilla,*" &c. A small coin sent him away; and then the guitarist struck up, to the tune of the "*Jota estudiantina,*" a verse in honour of the "*protectors of literature,*" as we were termed. Its burthen was to the effect, that "*he is the true gentleman who gives silver*"—an opinion that seems to be pretty widely diffused in the world, and not confined to the "*noble students*" alone.

When I sought my couch, it was, I found, one of a dozen, ranged round the walls of a large apartment facing the street. In this barrack the passengers by the diligence are expected to maintain the same social communion that exists by day, and were now snatching a few hours' repose previous to starting at midnight. At that hour the usual commotion took place, with

more than the usual amount of growling from the sleepy passengers; at last, however, the diligence drove off, the gates of the inn were closed and barred, the lights extinguished, and, as peace and silence reigned in the house, I anticipated an uninterrupted repose in the dormitory which I could now call my own, as I was left its only tenant. Sleep, then, was beginning to load my eyelids, when I was aroused by the rattling of a pebble on the floor; it had been cast through the open casement by some hand from the street, and was accompanied by a low whistle. "Ah me! there is a plan to rob and murder me," thinks the novice in Spain, "and that is the signal of the forty thieves who are come to do the deed." No such thing; ask mine host's daughter, or the moza of the inn, and one of the twain will confess that Juanico is waiting without. When the departure of the passengers leaves the room deserted, hither comes the fair one to lean over the balcony, and enjoy that converse which is all the more agreeable from the mystery with which it is conducted. I composed myself, therefore, again to slumber, though at first without success; another and another pebble rolled in, and at last one, more daring than the rest, reached my pallet, and smote not lightly. This was not to be borne, and I groped my way to the window, with the intention of saluting the offender with something less pleasant than the "*gratus puellæ risus ab angulo*," which he was doubtless expecting. The night, though serene, was very dark, and I looked in vain for my Romeo in the street. A darker shadow than usual was, however, observable in a doorway a few paces off, and this I conjectured was a man's figure: at all events, I addressed it, and begged it to cease from disturbing my rest; adding, moreover, the information that, if it waited



only four hours, the coast would be clear for its own purposes. Whether or no the information was acted upon I know not: at the expiry of that period I was myself waiting on the bridge for the muleteer, who was to convey me to Jaen. It was still deep night, and in the darkness time passed slowly; while the only sound audible was the melancholy ripple of the river against the piers of the bridge.

My lonely watch, however, was in reality a short one; and before the first streak of grey light our progress had been such that nearly a league lay between the southern bank of the river and the olive-wood through which we were then passing. Our route was towards the south, through a country which, though cultivated, was barren in features of natural beauty: there was, however, so much of historic interest attached to the district, that, unpicturesque as it was, one could not regard it with indifference. Every mile, nay, every rood of ground we traversed, had been the scene of chivalrous contention between the Moslem and his Christian foe: on those heights must have waved defiance the banners of the Crescent or the Cross; those barrancos must have sheltered many an ambuscade; and how often must those slopes have resounded to the cries of the Castilian ginete, or the turbaned horsemen of Granada!—for this was for long a frontier land, and here came the gallant spirits of either faith to seek and win renown in arms. History and tradition still preserve some memorials of these stirring times, in which there is always perceptible a vein of courteous and generous feeling, such as never fails to spring up between the really brave. To the right lay Arjona, the Urgabona of the Romans, now a place of little note: it was, however, the birth-place of Mohammed



Ben Alhamar, who rose by his warlike virtues from the principality of this petty town to the throne of Granada. Nearer Anduxar we had passed in the dark a small village, by name Arjonilla: this was the scene of a tragic event, commemorated in many a strain by the troubadours and poets of the chivalrous times in which it occurred.

Among the most distinguished squires of Don Enrique de Villena, master of the military order of Calatrava, was one named Macias, who, besides being renowned for his valour in the field, was no mean proficient in poesy. Between him and a doucella who was attached to the train of the master, there sprang up a mutual passion, which in its consequences was fatal to one of the lovers. It came to pass that, on one occasion, when Macias was absent on a distant expedition, his mistress was given in marriage by the master to an hidalgo of Porana. Both the master and the bridegroom, it is believed, were ignorant of the attachment, owing to the secrecy in which it had been enveloped. Nevertheless, in accordance with the customs of the age, the disconsolate lover did not cease to sing the praises of his mistress, but, with a devotion that disregarded every other consideration, neglected no opportunity of approaching the señora with every token of unabated affection.

Such conduct could not fail to give umbrage to the husband, who, unwilling at first to appeal to arms, determined to carry his complaints to the master; by the latter not only was Macias sternly rebuked, but commanded to desist from his unseasonable pretensions. In vain, however, could remonstrances and mandates restrain his devouring passion; it impelled him still to unguarded demonstrations of affection; and at length

the master, finding admonitions of no avail, was necessitated to send him a prisoner to Arjonilla, then a village in possession of the order. Here, in chains and deprived of liberty, his only consolation was to compose couplets in honour of her for whose sake he had braved the wrath of his order and tasted the miseries of a dungeon. Some of his sonnets reached the señora, but others, together with some correspondence, accidentally fell into the hands of her husband, whose jealous rage was thereby inflamed to the last degree. Mounting his horse, and equipped with lance and shield, he rode to Arjonilla, and reaching the prison wherein Macias was confined, beheld him sitting at a window occupied in the manner described by the poet of a succeeding age :—

Diciendo con gran dolor,  
Una cadena al pescuezo,  
De su cancion el empiezo.  
Lado seas, amor  
Por quantas penas padesco.

Without hesitation the other thrust his lance through the window and inflicted on Macias a mortal wound; then turning his horse round, fled with all swiftness, and escaped to the kingdom of Granada. To his victim was accorded an honourable interment; while the event became a favourite theme for the poets of his own as well as of succeeding times, to whose minds the fidelity of his love was more than a sufficient excuse for the questionable direction in which it flowed.

However rare it be in the present day for an Andalusian husband to avenge his wrongs in the blood of the offender, there are to be found, in ancient chronicles and legendary tales, ample proofs that an unsparing

vengeance was the style in which their more fiery ancestors vindicated their injured honour. Here is an instance that, for completeness of revenge, has few parallels: the tragedy occurred in Cordova about the middle of the fifteenth century.

Among the most noble cavaliers in that city was Don Hernando Alonso de Cordoba, commonly called the veinticuatro, from the municipal office he held, and as distinguished for valour, talents, and character, as was his spouse Doña Beatriz, a noble dame of Seville, for her feminine graces and qualities: their happiness appeared so perfect as to become proverbial through the city.

At that time the Bishop of Cordova was Don Pedro de Cordova y Solier, at whose house generally resided his brother Don Jorge, a knight of the military order of Calatrava, and commendator of its establishment in that city. As the knight was versed in all the accomplishments of the age, and was besides a relative of the veinticuatro, it is unnecessary to add that a close intimacy existed between the cousins, and that in time they became inseparable companions. Their friendship was at its height, when, in a fatal hour, an unworthy passion sprang up in the bosoms of the knight and Doña Beatriz; and unhappily for the peace of Don Hernando, at the very moment when his honour was most in danger, business of the utmost importance connected with the city summoned him to Toledo, where the court was then residing. His absence was a signal for the guilty pair to throw off the veil of secrecy; his dishonour was published in his own house, and of the numerous train of pages, doucellas, and domestics who served him, no one resented his master's disgrace except the humblest of the household. This was a slave named

Rodrigo, reared in the family, who, by messages from time to time, besought his lord to hasten his departure from Toledo, without venturing to apprise him of the urgent reasons for a speedy return. In the meantime Don Jorge, whether impelled by the motive to dissipate by an affectation of indifference the suspicions of his cousin, should he entertain any, or urged by business, took the resolution of likewise setting out for Toledo. At the moment of parting with Doña Beatriz the latter placed on his finger a ring of great value, enjoining him to wear it constantly in memory of her love. It was the most precious, and at the same time the most fatal gift she could bestow. The ring had been a present from the king to the veinticuatro in token of the estimation in which he held his noble qualities; and Don Hernando, thinking that the trust could be placed in no worthier hands, had committed it to the care of his spouse, from whose possession until now it had never departed.

Arrived at court, the first care of the knight was to renew his friendship with the veinticuatro, from whom, it need not be said, he cautiously concealed the gift of Doña Beatriz. The same prudence, however, did not regulate his conduct with the king: possibly the knight was ignorant of the history attached to the ring, but it so happened, that on kissing the hand of his sovereign, the eye of the latter was attracted by the glitter of diamonds on the subject's finger, and looking attentively, detected his own present to the veinticuatro. However much surprised, he said nothing at the moment.

The following morning the veinticuatro and his sovereign were pacing one of the halls of the Alcazar, when after a time the conversation turned upon the

arrival of the Commendator of Cordova. "Certes," said the monarch, "his appearance has revealed to me a transaction of which I did not believe you capable, Don Hernando; never did I suppose you capable of deception, or that you would hold in light esteem the tokens of my regard."

The veinticuatro, filled with astonishment and confusion at an accusation so unexpected, entreated his majesty to state the grounds of the charge his conscience told him was undeserved on his part.

"Don Hernando," replied the monarch, "what have you done with the ring, my present? You told me that it was always in the custody of your spouse, but it is not so; you have deceived me, and bestowed it upon a cavalier who, however dear his friendship may be to you, should nevertheless be regaled with other gifts than those I bestow on my subjects as proofs of esteem. Your cousin Don Jorge is the possessor of the ring with which I rewarded your loyal services."

In that moment the thoughts of the veinticuatro were agitated by the most cruel suspicions; in a voice almost inarticulate from emotion, he solicited permission from the monarch to repair to Cordova; adding, as he took his leave, "Rest assured, señor, I shall explain this matter so satisfactorily, that its memory shall last as long as your name." In a few minutes afterwards he had crossed the Tagus and was on the road to Cordova.

His arrival, though unexpected, was welcomed with the usual tokens of joy and affection from Doña Beatriz and the household; his own feelings he studiously dissembled, and took the first opportunity of questioning the slave, whose repeated messages now seemed full of a hidden meaning. The relation of the latter confirmed



his worst fears. "Enough," he cried; "be silent regarding the past, and henceforward I shall be not thy master but thy friend; but woe to thee if thy lips unclothe upon this subject." From that day he dreamt only of vengeance.

An occasion was not long in presenting itself. Don Jorge shortly after returned to Cordova, accompanied by his brother, Don Fernando, a knight of the same order; their intimacy with the veinticuatro was resumed on its former footing, and nothing on the part of the latter indicated the burning revenge that dwelt in his breast. One day he proposed they should depart for a distant part of the sierra for the purpose of enjoying the diversion of hunting; the brothers at first assented to the proposal, but as the day for their sport approached, both begged to be excused on different pretexts: these the veinticuatro feigned to receive in good part, and set out alone for the hunting-ground, where, he informed them, he should stay five days. No sooner had he departed, than the lovers embraced an opportunity so favourable for a meeting; Don Jorge repaired to the house under the cloud of night, accompanied by his brother, whom he had persuaded to this step by representing that a doucella of the lady was disposed to regard him with a favourable eye; along with them they brought a squire named Galindo.

Meanwhile, the veinticuatro was preparing the catastrophe of this dark history. As soon as the hunting party had proceeded to a sufficient distance from the city, he feigned a slight indisposition, which he alleged would probably yield to a short repose, but commanded the cavalcade to continue their journey. Attended only by his faithful slave, he remained behind, and the two lay concealed till midnight in a thicket by the

road. At that hour they retraced their steps, and, leaving their steeds a mile outside of the city, succeeded in entering it by a postern gate; from thence it was easy to reach undiscovered the mansion, into which they penetrated by scaling some walls.

Impelled by the boiling fury in his veins, he burst into the apartment of his spouse, to whom his presence was as terrible as that of death. In an instant her paramour lay before her, pierced by repeated stabs; and she herself would have shared the same fate in the following moment, had she not fallen senseless at his feet. In that state, the transition from insensibility to dissolution would have been a death without pain, and such was not the purpose of his thirsting vengeance; quitting her, therefore, he entered the adjoining chamber, in which he found the doucella and her gallant, both of whom he despatched with the blood-stained weapon in his hand. His next victim was the unfortunate squire, Galindo, whom he encountered in the corridor, endeavouring to conceal himself; he, too, shared the fate of his master, and fell covered with wounds. One would think that enough of blood had been shed to appease the most exacting revenge; but the long suppressed wrath of the veinticuatro had risen into the fury of a demon, which blood itself could scarcely satiate. Rushing through the house like a madman, he burst into chamber after chamber, slaying and wounding all whom he met, without distinction of age or sex. Tradition relates, that on that night he slew fifteen persons of his household.

Somewhat calmed by the aspect of this scene of slaughter, he returned to the apartment of his spouse, who, having recovered her senses, was now a prey to all the horrors of her situation. On seeing him enter, she

threw herself at his feet, imploring mercy in an agony of fear and remorse. For a little time the veinticuatro listened to her prayers with a horrible satisfaction; and then, approaching her, not with precipitate haste, but with the step of one who deliberately executes the behests of justice, buried his poniard in her bosom.

The same hour he and the slave were hurrying towards the frontier of France. There, however, he did not remain long: revenge, according to the maxims of the age, was the duty of an injured husband; and, terrible as was that of the veinticuatro, it did not restrain his sovereign from shortly afterwards conceding to him a full pardon for an act which was considered necessary for the vindication of his honour. He returned to Cordova, and is said to have subsequently distinguished himself much by his exploits against the Moors.

About two leagues from Jaen, we passed through a miserable hamlet called Fuenta del Rey. The only remarkable object in this was an atalaya, or watch-tower, now dismantled and grey with years. This ruin marked the district as having been a border land, where such places of strength were indispensable to the security of its scattered population, and reminded one of the peel towers, or fortified houses, with which the Scottish borders were once studded. Like these fortresses, which were generally within sight of each other, the better to communicate intelligence of the foe by beacons or other signals, this atalaya was in full view of the castle of Jaen, and had, doubtless, been constructed to answer a similar purpose. From this point a wide prospect over the vega of Jaen was commanded: here and there a spot of dark green caught the eye, or a line of straggling trees marked the course of some stream, but every-

where else its aspect was that of a parched and dusty land. Gladly one turned to the dark ranges that encircled this brown expanse, and traced the serrated outlines of the ridges as they rose above each other. Directly in front, but in the furthest distance, towered above all the Sierra de Mancha Real, distinguished by a remarkable gap in its loftiest peak, which seemed cloven half way down from the summit; nearer, and to the right hand, was the Sierra of Jaen, a bold and craggy chain, which appeared to have advanced into the vega as if with the intention of crossing to the opposite boundary, but had abruptly halted at the commencement of its journey; on the summit of a rocky pinnacle, heading the advance, were to be seen the walls of the fortress, and at its base the city of Jaen.

I was flattering myself with the prospect of a short journey across the vega, being deceived by the apparent proximity of the city, when my muleteer cut short my anticipations by the assurance that, in reality, two leagues of road were yet to be traversed. "Malditas leguas!" he emphatically added, from a recollection of his winter journey, when the almost impassable condition of the track, not to speak of the swollen torrents to be crossed, must have severely tried the endurance of his animals. Instead, however, of quagmires and turbid brooks, we encountered nothing worse than dust and channels without water: once or twice a small stream trickled among the shining stones that occupied the bottom of these water-courses, but it was invariably salt to the taste, and our mules, though thirsty, refused to drink of it. Traversing this hot plain at a slow pace, it was a welcome change when we reached the skirts of the sierra. Though the lime-stone rock everywhere pierced the surface in naked masses, or lay strewed



around in grey blocks, there were yet spots of verdure between, and streamlets clear as crystal came leaping down from the crags, and crossed our path with a cheerful murmur. Then came gardens, whose nourishment was from these transparent waters, diffused in numberless rills through each enclosure; and last of all came the walls of the city, which we reached at noon.



## CHAPTER XIII.

JAEN. — ITS HISTORY. — CHIVALROUS ACT OF MOHAMMED BEN ALHAMAR. — ANCIENT ASPECT OF THE CITY. — THE CATHEDRAL. — PRIESTLY CICERONE. — HIS KINDNESS. — CASTLE OF JAEN. — ANDALUCIAN SCENERY. — THE BORRACHO. — PENA DE MARTOS. — THE FATE OF THE CARVAJALS. — GALLANT DEFENCE OF THE FORTRESS. — EFFECTS OF A CONFLAGRATION.

OF the four kingdoms into which the province of Andalucia was anciently divided, that of Jaen is probably the least known to the general reader. While Cordova, Seville, and Granada successively became the seats of the Arab and Moorish dominions south of the Sierra Morena, this city never reached a higher dignity than that of a provincial capital, sometimes independent, but never the master of its Moslem neighbours. In extent and fertility of territory it was inferior in no respect to the others; and the cause, therefore, of its subordinate position in Andalucian affairs must be ascribed partly to its insulated situation, and latterly, when the Moorish empire was sinking, to its proximity to the inveterate foes of the Crescent. Nevertheless, it yielded to the arms of the Christian conqueror only when the capture of Cordova had lessened its powers of resistance, had deprived its gallant defenders of a potent alliance, and left it alone and unsupported to brave the assaults of the victorious Castilians. But the reduction of the city and its castle was no easy task even under

such disadvantages; its defence against the Christians was protracted and obstinate, and well worthy of its ancient name; and a capitulation was finally accorded under circumstances which display the chivalrous spirit of the times, and fall like a sunbeam across the dreary path of war.

Jaen, from its geographical position no less than its natural strength, was the chief bulwark on the north to the kingdom of Granada, founded by Mohammed Ben Alhamar, a monarch of no ordinary abilities. The Moorish king made efforts commensurate with the importance of the object to save the city from the fate of Cordova. In person he led an army to its assistance, but was signally defeated; the succours he despatched were intercepted; and at length it became apparent, not only that its fall was inevitable, but that in the catastrophe might be involved the dawning fortunes of his own capital. In such a dismal situation he flung aside his arms, and adopted a resolution that bespeaks the chivalry of his character. Without having obtained a safe-conduct from Fernando, he repaired alone to the camp of that monarch, sought an audience from him, disclosed his name and rank, and offering to become his vassal, kissed his hand in token of homage.

Fernando was not to be surpassed in generosity; he received his noble rival with every mark of distinction, and showed himself worthy of such confidence. The treaty between the two monarchs was speedily concluded; Jaen was surrendered, and the Moorish king became the feudatory of his more successful and powerful adversary, but in return was guaranteed in the possession of his remaining dominion. These terms, though hard, were fraught with advantage to Aben Alhamar. They enabled him to consolidate the wreck of the Mo-

hammedan Empire in Andalucia, and to lay the foundation of a kingdom which endured for more than two centuries; and, but for his timely concessions, would have fallen in its infancy to the overshadowing power of the Castilians.

I found it easier to credit the antiquity of Jaen than that of its sister capitals of Seville and Cordova. Take from these latter cities their Moorish walls, alcazars, mosques, and giraldas, and in the remaining mass of brick and plaster little survives to remind the observer of the turbaned race which lived and died within its precincts; but here we have a city exhibiting in its street-architecture abundant traces of its former masters, and it would not be difficult to imagine that they had abandoned their homes just the other day to the enemies of their creed. Towards the street the doors are low, the windows few and small; while the massive aspect of the houses, and the dark tints of the limestone used in their construction, give them the air of prisons, and cause one to ask if hearts have ever beat lightly within these sombre dwellings. The town consists of one principal street, encircling the base of a hill, on whose summit rise the walls of its castle. As you walk along, you see on either hand narrow and tortuous lanes, into which a sunbeam never strays. These in the cities of our native land we should mark as the abodes of want and misery, and should not start to see wretchedness in every shape seeking shelter in them; but poverty here wears a smile, however heavy the burden it has to endure: the merry tinkle of the guitar is heard in these its haunts; and there, in that alley a little broader than the others, a few of its sons and daughters are dancing more blithely than the inmates of a ball-room. The swarthy maidens, though humbly clad,

might vie with the best in natural gracefulness ; neither is their mirth boisterous or rude. A few flowers mingle with their coal-black locks, and set off their dusky charms more effectively than sparkling jewels. Should the dancer drop one, it is picked up and replaced without an effort, invariably without consulting a glass ; and had you studied the rules of taste your whole lifetime, you could not have done it better. But the dance is ended: the castanets cease to rattle, and the young folks, breathless and flushed, assemble before a house, on the threshold of which is seated an old man wrapped in a tattered brown cloak. Presently he appears to become the object of some general wish : those are gestures of entreaty that are directed to him by the youthful circle ; doubtless he is famed as a teller of stories—an accomplishment in as high repute in Andalusia as it is in the East—and he is assailed with the usual cry, “ Abuelo, cuent’ usted un cuento.” Apparently their wishes are to be gratified, for the whole party assume the attitudes of listeners, and some seat themselves on the ground at his feet ; then begins some romance of the wars with the Moslems, or the legend of a treasure-seeker, or perhaps the adventures of some brigand, who is invariably painted as the friend of the poor but the spoiler of the rich, and driven to his lawless career by intolerable wrongs. While he speaks, all eyes are bent upon him, and a breathless silence prevails, which is broken only when the tale is ended. Immediately on the last word being spoken, a chorus of exclamations and questions proceeds from the throats of his hearers, and for some time they canvass the incidents of his narrative, and the fate of the hero, with all the ardour of Andalusians in regard to trifles. Then the guitar sounds some monotonous strain, the castanets are handled, and



a fandango or bolero engages the invigorated dancers in its rapid evolutions.

At the southern wing of the city stands the cathedral, a modern structure in the Greco-Roman style. In point of design, it boasts of more correctness than such edifices generally display in Andalusia; but the interior is disfigured by the position of the choir, which occupies the centre of the building, and circumscribes the space allotted to worshippers. There is, however, much beauty in the elaborate carvings of this choir, representing passages from the New Testament, the execution of which denotes the artist to have possessed no small skill, whatever we may think of the purity of his taste.

The sacristy is one of the finest in Andalusia: it is a spacious and lofty apartment, the walls of which are lined with Corinthian pilasters, and the general effect is that of noble simplicity. While admiring its proportions, and regretting, at the same time, that it formed almost a solitary exception to the architectural barbarisms by which every sacred edifice in Andalusia is deformed, a priest approached, and courteously accosted me.

“Dispense *vm.* Señor, *vm.* es Frances?”

“No, Señor,” I replied, “Ingles, para servir a *vm.*”

This was the preface to a long conversation, in which my priestly questioner showed himself to be an admirer of the fine arts: and at length, carried away by his enthusiasm, he requested permission to act as my cicerone through the cathedral. I need not say that his offer was gladly accepted, and we strolled from chapel to chapel, while he pointed out such objects as were worthy of note; pictures, sculptures, wooden images, and relics had each their tale, which I refrain from impart-



ing to the reader, as they would prove less interesting to him than to the worthy priest, in whose eyes the most insignificant trifle attached to his church was possessed of extraordinary virtues and excellences, upon which he failed not to expatiate long and eloquently. Among the relics was the famous Santa Faz, or Holy Face of our Saviour, an object of such devout veneration among the superstitious in Andalusia, that many carry miniatures of it on their persons as charms against danger. The relic I did not see, for it is exposed to the public gaze only twice in the year; but it is said to be the representation of our Saviour's countenance, which was effected while he was on the cross. On that occasion Saint Veronica wiped his countenance with her handkerchief, and on taking it away, the image of his features was found miraculously impressed on it, and hence the origin of the Santo Rostro.

While employed in an examination of the choir, he left me, in order to perform mass in an adjacent chapel; such, as I understood, being his daily duty. Many chapels have been founded by the pious, on the condition that daily worship be offered up in them; so that, whether there be a congregation or no, a priest must be in attendance to discharge the sacred obligation. On rejoining him, I found myself the sole spectator of his religious offices, which, on my appearance, he proceeded to hurry to a conclusion, having first motioned me to take a seat on a bench within a few feet of the altar. If the mass was ill said, or mingled with profane conversation, I fear I have to answer for being the cause, although innocently. My courteous friend could not reconcile with his politeness the idea of my waiting in silence till its termination, and every moment, therefore, he was breaking off from the service to address some

remark relative to the works of art within sight, in order that my thoughts might be agreeably occupied during the detention to which I was subjected. At last his task came to an end, and seating himself on the bench beside me, we entered into an amicable discourse upon points of faith. It was apparent that my clerical friend, however conversant with the doctrines of his own church, knew very little of the Protestant creed; every point of difference was therefore a matter of wonder, and many were the Ave Marias which interrupted my explanations. But beyond these no harsher word escaped him in reference to the startling heresies I unfolded; indeed, so careful was he to avoid any phrase that might savour of offence, that upon unwittingly using the expression "nosotros Christianos" (we Christians), in speaking of his own belief, he corrected himself, and in place of that term, the sole right to which Spaniards arrogate to themselves, he modified it into the more specific one of "nosotros Catolicos."

When we rose to part, he added to his adieus an invitation to visit him that evening at his own abode. I went accordingly, and found it at the furthest extremity of a mean and narrow alley. Descending a few steps, I reached the door, and thence traversing a low and dingy passage, was ushered into a spacious and elegant apartment, lighted by several large windows; over these and the doors depended damask hangings; the rest of the furniture was antique and costly, while several paintings on the walls, and the presence of a piano and organ, bespoke their owner to be a man of cultivated tastes. In an oratory adjoining was an altar, surmounted by an Ecce Homo by Velasquez. From the windows was commanded a fine view of the vega, over which the shadows of evening were fast creeping. In the distance

stretched across the horizon the Sierra de Mancha Real, now reflecting back the last glances of day. As its sharp and jagged summits rose up tinged with fire, and overtopped the darkness in which their bases were enveloped, it wanted but little to carry the imagination back to the times when the fires of Celtic worship blazed at nightfall from these pinnacles, and lighted them up just as the setting sun was now doing.

Seated on one of the comfortable sofas of the apartment—a luxury I had not enjoyed for months—the evening passed too rapidly away. I protracted my stay as long as I reasonably could, and this, notwithstanding my kind entertainer had not yet done with me; next morning he was in the cathedral, waiting to conduct me through the vaults, which are seldom shown to strangers. In one was a kind of natural mummy, carefully protected from injury by being enclosed in a glass case; it was the corpse of a canon, who was buried in the year 1702, and when accidentally disinterred, was found to have resisted decay; every feature was in a state of perfect preservation, and except for the hollowness of the cheeks, and the colour of the skin, which resembled parchment, the countenance might have passed for that of a sleeper. From the foundation we ascended to the towers, which were cracked and rent in several places by the terrible earthquake of 1755. From hence the city was displayed to view, and the position of the cathedral clearly discerned. Close to it, on the south, was the ancient wall of the city, studded with its Moorish towers, and running upwards to join the fortification of the castle. To the latter stronghold I climbed in the course of the day, and could not but admire the strength of its position. From the vega it appeared united to the range of which it was the termination, and strong

only on the side facing the plain; but on reaching its rocky site, a yawning ravine came into view, cutting it off from the neighbouring ridge, and converting it into an isolated and inaccessible post. With great labour and trouble, the Moors had carried a wall round the brow of this natural citadel, thus enclosing an area of several acres, which was ready to serve either as a camp, a town, or a fortress, as circumstances required; and in either capacity was proof against all enemies but famine.

From this elevation a wide and strangely varied prospect met the eye. Below, the city, belting the foot of the steep acclivities with a narrow girdle of habitations, mixed with spires and towers; without its walls commenced the vega, a far extended and monotonous plain, stripped of its harvests, and as lonely as the waste of waters: its boundaries were sunburnt ridges, upon which no green leaf fluttered; here they swelled up into rounded eminences, deeply furrowed by the channels of wintry torrents; there they shot up rugged and angular, flinging out buttresses of iron strength and hue from their sides; and far in the distance other elevations rose upon the horizon like the wing of night, and cast dark frowns towards this scene so mournfully desolate.

Turning from the plain to the sierra behind me, the same spectacle of loneliness was repeated, but with sterner accompaniments. Splintered and shattered crags, dark and rugged ravines, steep slopes strewn with rocky masses, tall cliffs and stony mounds, were grouped together in wild disorder, and might have served for a representation of the Temple of Desolation in ruins. Not a sound broke in upon the silence that reigned around; no murmur of streams came up from below, no scream of the eagle echoed among the crags, no voice of rural life rose into the air; all was as still as utter soli-



tude could make it, though a city peopled with thousands lay within a bow-shot. Then, through openings in the nearer ridges, the eye caught glimpses of the background to the picture—an elevated wilderness of rocky steepes, full of dusky glens, narrow gorges winding darkly into the distance, shivered summits, and broken mountain crests; all these formed a scene lonely, savage, and drear.

Such is Andalucia as she commonly presents herself among her mountain scenery: her features then, though grand and noble, seem to express none but the darkest moods of nature; sometimes bleak and gloomy, sometimes sullen and lowering, but never smiling. No! there is a cloud upon her countenance even in her happiest moments; even when it softens amid her blooming vegas, where verdure and crystal rills join with the perfumed breath of the orange-flower to charm the senses, a withering shade will steal across from the nearest sierra, and fall with mournful effect upon the prospect.

At four o'clock I left Jaen, not, however, before bidding adieu to the worthy clerigo, according to the custom of the country. "Amigo," said he, "you will never return to Jaen; but if you have anything to do here, remember that the Prebendario C—— will serve you as far as lies in his power."

With expressions of esteem, which on my side at least were unfeigned, we parted; and in a few minutes thereafter I was coasting round the walls of the city, in company with the lad who acted as muleteer. About half a league on our way we overtook a man mounted on a donkey travelling the same road, who, on our appearance, proceeded, without ceremony, to join company. To have made any objections to his society, would have been, according to the notions of the country,



a churlish and unhandsome act; but never was I more disposed to do so than on beholding his countenance, upon which a villanous compound of evil passions was plainly stamped.

“Going to Baena, Señor?” was his first query, which I answered in the affirmative; a long pause then ensued, during which he stealthily scrutinized my equipments and appearance, which seemed to strike him as something strange and novel. At length he exclaimed, in the same short-hand style in which he accosted me, “Discharged soldier, sir?”—eyeing, at the same time, the gun I carried. I shook my head, and our new companion relapsed into a state of greater perplexity than before, from which, after another and longer pause, he emerged to offer with officious zeal to carry the double-barrel, which still seemed to fascinate his eyes. No man in Spain, possessed of his sober senses, would dream of making this request: it hastened the conclusion to which, in my own mind, I had been arriving in regard to the querist. I simply replied that I never trusted my gun to others, for fear of accidents; and here chimed in my muleteer—“What says the refran? La escopeta y la muger no se da a nadie” (a gun and a wife are lent to nobody). With this answer our questioner was silenced, and not another word passed between us so long as he remained in our company, which he abruptly quitted on passing a wine-shop in the small village of Torrecampo. “Ah! borracho!” cried my muleteer, in a voice expressive of the strongest abhorrence and disgust; “see how the drunkard goes to his trough.”

This he said in the tone with which all Andalucians speak of a being so degraded as the habitual slave of intoxication; indeed, no stigma upon the character is considered so vile as that of drunkenness, and no worse

affront can be offered to a peasant than to style him "borracho," a term of reproach immeasurably worse in his eyes than the name of murderer. Sober and temperate himself, he rarely suffers the wine-cup to touch his lips, and would deem himself disgraced if it betrayed him into excess; moreover, he sees it to be the source of nearly all the brutal crimes committed in his country, the great proportion of which spring from the wine-shops, among whose frequenters the navaja is constantly produced to settle disputes, and horrible murders in this way committed. I do not, however, include in these remarks the arrieros and caleseros, a class with which the traveller is most frequently brought into contact. These men, true to the habits of their calling, which all over the world appears to be a thirsty one, have no objection to the juice of the grape, and imbibe it freely: for this, many among them substitute a fiery liquid, called "aguardiente anisado," that is, brandy flavoured with aniseed; which few, I think, will taste without characterising as a detestable mixture.

To the left, rising high above the low chain with which it was connected, was a precipitous peak of peculiar shape, and, like all the isolated elevations in this district, crowned by battlements and towers as weather-stained as their foundations of primeval rock. A mysterious interest hangs round this lofty height, and I fastened my eyes upon its dark sides as if it were yet possible to discover the exact spot upon which was perpetrated the tragedy that gives it a place in history. What reader of the Spanish chronicles does not remember the Peña de Martos, the fate of the knightly brothers precipitated from its summit, and the singular doom of their unjust sovereign?

Ferdinand the Fourth of Castile was holding his

court in Palencia, when one morning the lifeless body of a favourite courtier, Juan Alonso de Benavides, was discovered at the very gate of the royal alcazar. Who the false assassins were, the utmost exertions made by the monarch failed to indicate; but suspicion at last fell upon the two brothers, Pedro and Juan Alonso de Carvajal, who were serving at the time in the royal guard. The accused loudly protested their innocence of the charge, which appears to have been wholly unsupported by evidence to criminate them—but in vain; the vengeance of the monarch was to be appeased only by blood: whether innocent or not it mattered little, and both were condemned to die. The unhappy men were conveyed to Martos, where they were executed by being hurled from the summit of its loftiest cliff. The strangest part of the tale is yet to be told. Previous to the awful sentence being inflicted on them, the innocent knights invoked the vengeance of Heaven upon their unjust monarch, and cited him to meet them within thirty days at the bar of Divine Justice. Their summons would appear not to have passed unheard. Before the expiry of the month, Ferdinand had joined his victims in the world of spirits, having suddenly died in Jaen while taking his siesta: hence he is styled in history the *Emplazado*, or *Summoned*, in allusion to this mysterious event.

There are, however, other pages in the early chronicles of Spain, which surround this rock with the worthier deeds of chivalrous gallantry. Soon after its conquest from the Moslems, in 1225, by San Fernando, it was bestowed by that warlike and sagacious monarch on the military order of Calatrava, in accordance with the dictates of a wise policy, by which a community of warriors was interposed between his recent acqui-



tions and the hereditary foes of his crown and faith. In the hands of that powerful order, to whom at the same time were conceded large possessions in the vicinity, as well as several towns, it rose to be a fortress of no common strength, and usually bore the brunt of hostilities proceeding from the side of Granada. On one occasion, however, the stronghold was on the brink of returning to the sway of its Moslem masters, and was only rescued from its perilous strait by a stroke of female ingenuity. Shortly after its capture the Castilians, a formidable force, led by Mohammed Ben Alhamar, one of the most warlike kings of Granada, suddenly appeared upon the frontier, and surrounded the castle with overwhelming numbers. No time could have been more opportunely chosen for such a plan, as scarcely a spearman remained to guard the walls. Its governor, the Conde de Lara, adelantado of the frontier, was attending the royal council in Toledo; his nephew, to whom he had devolved the important trust of defending it, was, with culpable rashness, making incursions upon the Moorish dominions with the scanty garrison, in place of abiding by the post confided to his arm. With the assurance, therefore, of finding an easy prey, the Moorish monarch, aware of the scantiness of its defenders but not of their total absence, advanced boldly to the foot of the rock, and marshalled his host for an assault. What was his surprise, however, to behold the battlements crowned, as if by magic, with bands of knights and men-at-arms, who, with banners waving, and loud shouts of defiance, replied to the wild cries of his own soldiery. Such an unexpected spectacle damps the ardour of the monarch, and he meditates making preparations for a siege in form, when a commotion in the rear of his army arouses his attention.

It is the returning garrison, who, opportunely augmented by some knights of Calatrava, and stimulated by the example of their young leader, are breaking through his ranks and cutting a path to the beleaguered fortress. Surprised and dismayed, the Moorish host gives way before the fury of their onset, and the victorious band reaches without loss the castle gates, which they enter in triumph. What strange forms are these that meet their eyes? In front stands the noble Condesa de Lara, while behind are ranged the damsels of her household, wearing corslets and helmets, and grasping swords in their hands. It was they who, on the approach of the enemy, donned the armour of men, and mounting to the defenceless ramparts, displayed those warlike groups that seemed to wait impatiently with lance and sword for the attack.

Nearly a hundred years later, a more successful blow was struck by the Moors, and Martos fell into their hands at a period when the kingdom of Castile was more than usually distracted by dissensions among its powerful and turbulent nobility. At such times the successes of the Moslems were in proportion to the degree of discord prevailing in their opponents' councils; but though this may have contributed to the capture of Martos, it is probable that its fall was in a great measure owing to the employment of cannon, which were used during the siege. In the previous year of 1325, Baza had surrendered to the Moors; its reduction, according to the testimony of their historians, being principally effected by those new engines of destruction which, as they expressed it, launched globes of fire that, like the bolts of the tempest, laid low the towers and walls of the city. The same terrible means were employed against Martos, whose natural strength,



though far superior to that of the above-named city, was no defence against the thunders of the new invention; and its capture speedily ensued, accompanied by the slaughter of its brave defenders and the captivity of their families.

It was nightfall when we reached Torreximeno, my quarters for the night. The village boasted of a plaza, at one corner of which was situated the inn. Its internal accommodations were, to my surprise, far superior to those of the village hostelrys one usually meets with in Andalucia; and though the floor of my chamber had a slope like the deck of a vessel heeling over to a stiff breeze, it was a luxury to enjoy this in solitude, and to be removed from the clamour and noise of the muleteers who filled the lower story.

At daybreak we were beyond the village, and crossing the scanty stream of the Rio Salado by a dilapidated bridge. Extensive groves of olives clothed its banks, and covered the country for many a mile on each side of our track; but these we gradually left behind, on descending from the high and undulating ground through which we had pursued our way since leaving Jaen. Our route now led us by the southern skirts of the great valley of the Guadalquivir, which here, as at every other point where I had touched it, displayed the exuberant fertility of its soil. At one spot there came prominently into view the evils of leaving a large tract of land without fences or enclosures. By some mishap, fire had been communicated to the ripe wheat; and as there was no let or hindrance to its progress, the flames had swept far and wide ere their course was stayed: as near as it was possible to guess, two thousand acres had thus fallen to the consuming element. In the midst of the devastation stood

a farm-house, looking disconsolately upon the region of blackened stubble and scorched earth that now supplied the place of its golden harvests.

Passing the Venta de Doña Maria, once a notorious harbour for robbers, we reached soon after midday a slight eminence from which the spires of Baena became visible. Its situation was a commentary upon the war-like propensities of former ages. At the foot of a pretty high ridge there rose a conical elevation, severed from the other by a valley, and by nature strongly fortified with steep and abrupt slopes; the summit was crowned by a castle called La Casa del Duque, from whose walls the town extended downwards, and was encircled by fortifications of a Moorish origin.

## CHAPTER XIV.

BAENA.—THE TOMB OF THE POMPEYS.—PASSAGE OF ARMS WITH THE INNKEEPER. — STRENGTH OF LOCAL FEMING IN SPAIN. — THE SIMA DE CABRA.—ITS MYSTERIOUS HISTORY.—MURDER WILL OUT.—A SPANISH CRIMINAL PROCESS.—ASPECT OF AN ANDALUCIAN CAMPINA.—CAPTURE OF BOABDIL THE UNLUCKY. — LUCENA.—PRISON OF BOABDIL.—MOONLIGHT DANCE ON THE ALAMEDA. — ROUTE TO GRANADA. — NOCTURNAL RIDE. — VEGA OF GRANADA.

DURING the intense heat of an Andalusian noon, it is neither wise nor pleasant to encounter the rays of the sun while their stroke is most biting; and the traveller ought rather to follow the custom of the country, which defers active exertion to the cool of the evening or morning, when it is attended with least danger. For these reasons, it was near sunset when I stood upon the castle-walls with the comandante beside me, leaning over the battlements and surveying the wide prospect, while he communicated the names of the various hamlets and towns that were scattered over the broad plain. To the northwards, about six miles distant, though it seemed almost under the eye, was a solitary farm-house, which was all that marked the site of *Castrum Priscum*, a town of some note in the ancient province of *Bætica*. Every day the labourer discloses some memorial of its existence, as he drives the plough over the foundations of what were once temples and dwelling-houses, and brings to light

domestic utensils, earthenware, medals, warlike weapons, and other tokens of the habits and daily life of its Roman population. The discovery, however, which attracted considerable attention at the time, was that of a sepulchral vault containing the ashes of a family who bore the illustrious name of Pompey. In the year 1833, some labourers connected with the farm pierced through an arch of stone, which on investigation was found to be the roof of a subterranean chamber, some ten feet long by seven broad. On descending into it, they found on either side, about a foot and a half from the ground, a stone-shelf upon which rested fourteen cinerary urns, mingled with lachrymatories, vials, and bowls, one of which was of very elegant design and workmanship. In one corner stood a leaden jar of peculiar form, resembling in shape and size a beehive inverted, which served as a case for a lamp; and, improbable as it sounds, the men united in affirming that from this a light was streaming on their first effecting an aperture in the roof, but was extinguished either by the admission of the external air, or by the falling of some rubbish upon the spot, by which the lamp was broken and its contents spilt. Be this as it may, the remains of some glutinous liquid adhered to the fragments of the lamp, and were undoubtedly the residuum of the oil or other substance by which it was fed. Fortunately for the preservation of these interesting relics, the proprietor of the land was a man of cultivated mind, and took care to have them transported to his house in Baena, where I had an opportunity of examining the whole collection. The urns were of various dimensions and shapes, generally oblong and about a foot in length, and were rather rudely formed of grey limestone. Upon one side was carved

the name of the deceased; and, save that simple inscription, which appeared as sharply cut as the day on which it issued from the graver's hands, no other embellishment adorned the exterior. Within, there was of course the usual contents of dust and ashes, mingled with fragments of calcined bone. But the names of their owners aroused a deeper interest, and carried one out of the field of antiquarian curiosity into the more attractive one of historic speculation. Who was the Pompey whose ashes were interred in the first of these urns?—as appears from the following inscription:—

M. POMPEIUS. Q. F. GAL. ICSTNIS  
II. VIR PRIMUS. DE FAMILIA  
POMPEIA.

The question is difficult to answer satisfactorily, but one thing is certain, that these were not the remains of the great Pompey, as is urged by a worthy Franciscan monk of Baena; for, however intimate might be the ties between that distinguished name and Andalusia, where its last hopes expired on the plain of Munda, it is stretching conjecture too far to suppose that his ashes were transported from Egypt to rest in an obscure town of a distant Roman province. It is far more probable that this was the sepulchre of a branch of the Pompeian family, which appears to have settled here, and, from the fact of several barbarous names being engraved on other urns, to have intermarried, or otherwise been closely allied, with a race of native origin. These names are certainly sufficiently uncouth, and such as “would have made Quintilian stare and gasp.”

The first is Velaunis, and then follow Ildrons, Igalchis, Velgan, Siseanbahan, to which must be added a



female one, Junia Inghaana. Whether they are of Celtiberian or Phœnician derivation is a question for the learned to decide; but it must be confessed that in the pronunciation of the words there is something that reminds us of the East. On the last of the urns was carved the solitary word GRACCHI, which to the erudite monk above-mentioned was a sufficient foundation for rearing another theory, in which the place of sepulture of those popular leaders was transferred from Rome to this remote spot. The worthy father, however, strangely omitted to point out how, when, and for what purpose their exhumation was undertaken; and appeared to think that, because Gracchi were slain at Rome, and Gracchi were buried here, no further proof was needed to establish their identity, and that it was out of the question to suppose there could be other bearers of that name than those of whom history makes mention.

My host of the posada in Baena was the possessor of a big and burly frame, a loud voice, and bloated features, expressive of a dogged and brutal nature. His portrait, unattractive as it is, occasionally rises before my memory, for it came to pass that between the original and myself there occurred a dispute, which, commencing like those of Homer's heroes, with a war of words, terminated at last in an appeal to arms on both sides. The cause of the fray was the very matter-of-fact occurrence of an exorbitant bill. On all occasions I had satisfied the demands of innkeepers without a murmur, and I would recommend travellers in Spain to do likewise; after all, their extortion generally amounts to a few pesetas only, the saving of which is more than counterbalanced by the expenditure of time and temper, inseparable from the half hour's wrangling

and vociferation necessary to recover them. Mine host of Baena, however, must needs add to his bill an insolent manner and a bullying tone, which were far harder to digest than his outrageous charges. Had he but indulged in a little of the *suaviter in modo*, one might have submitted peaceably to the *fortiter in re*; but when a man confronts you with brows as black as thunder, and enforces his demands with a swagger and strange oaths, he looks so like the robber who cries "Stand, and deliver!" that you speedily get into the best possible humour for knocking him down, or being knocked down yourself. Accordingly, no parliamentary guardian of the nation's interests ever cut down a chancellor's budget more ruthlessly than I did the items of the "cuenta" submitted to me; during which process, my mozo, by a stroke of generalship worthy of his namesake, Gonsalvo de Cordova, succeeded in withdrawing with bag and baggage, so that I was left unencumbered to cover the retreat.

"Well," said the impatient host, lashing himself into a fury, as he foresaw a storm brewing; "are you not done?"

"There," I replied, tendering him exactly one half of his demand, which yet was a sum at which a native traveller would have shrugged his shoulders. A frightful change came over the man's countenance as I did this. Without a word, he struck my hand from below, causing the silver to fly in all directions, and then rushing to the doorway, planted himself there. While his features were convulsed with passion, he swore with horribly blasphemous oaths, that my blood should stain the navaja in his hand before I departed without rendering him the last farthing of his just demands. On hearing his voice, now raised to the loudest pitch,

there jumped from a side door a sort of clerk employed in the house, whose red eyes, unfurnished with lashes, gave him a disgusting air of dissipation. This worthy also drew his navaja, and imitated, as well as he could, the furious gestures of his master. For myself, I merely put my hands into the pockets of my jacket, and, stepping up to the two, said as quietly as I could to mine host, "Amigo, I *must* pass; and if you will not suffer me, I shall be then obliged to summon my friends."

"What friends?" said the other, with a scornful laugh, and a flourish of his blade before my eyes.

"These," I replied, withdrawing a hand from each pocket, and showing to his astonished gaze that each grasped a pocket-pistol.

Now, there is something particularly unpleasant in seeing a loaded pistol pointed at one's person with no friendly intent, and I could understand, therefore, how such a sight wrought upon my host's feelings a magical alteration: he looked aghast, his braggart air vanished, and lastly his navaja found its way back to the folds of his girdle. His confederate did not take a second look at the little implements, but bolted into the escribania as quickly as he had emerged, and began to scribble away as if his life depended upon the rapidity of his pen's movements.

"Vamos, vamos," said his master; "let us drop this jest, it has lasted long enough."

"Be it so," I replied; "and now, I presume, you are satisfied?"

"Si, Señor," said he, seizing my hand, and shaking it in a very friendly way; "and let me give you this advice, Señor. You are going to Lucena: beware of the innkeepers there; they are the greatest rogues in

all the neighbourhood." And then, patting me on the shoulder, suffered me to depart.

"I'd as lief he had smote me on the mouth with ratsbane;" but, saying nothing, I crossed the threshold, and descended the steep road leading towards Lucena. At the foot of the declivity I found my muleteer in waiting; and, turning the mules into a path which mounted the ridge on the southern side of the town, we kept along its brow, winding through extensive groves of olives. Through occasional openings, fine views were caught, on the right hand, of the plain beneath, in the midst of which rose, half-shrouded in vapour, the Sierra de Estepa. There was no want of life on the road, for at every turn we met droves of mules; their sleepy masters reeling on their saddles as the patient animals stepped cautiously in single file, and only unclosing their eyes to mutter a drowsy "*Vaya usted con Dios, caballeros*," when we passed. My own mozo was an "*hijo de Baena*," a "*son of Baena*," as the Spaniards poetically phrase it—a fact I discovered by unwittingly making an observation that hurt that blind attachment which every Spaniard bears to his native pueblo. "Are then," said I, "the innkeepers of Lucena as great rogues as those of Baena?"

"Señor," he answered, indignantly, "the innkeepers of Baena are the best of their class; son muy honrados, and very different from the gente of Lucena, and especially the posaderos there, who chupan la sangre de viajeros" (suck the blood of travellers). "*Vaya*. I would not be an inhabitant of Lucena for a million of reals."

This chord of local feeling is one that vibrates in Spain to the least touch, and, if rudely struck, stirs up in Spanish bosoms little less vehemence and excitement



than a direct insult. One of its worst features is to make no distinction between the spirit of sober criticism and that of wilful depreciation ; both are classed in the same category ; and a citizen would hold himself to be no worthy "hijo" of his pueblo, if he did not resent an observation upon the defective architecture of its church steeple as readily as a sneer at the poverty of its population. I was not, therefore, surprised at this indignant burst of my mozo, for I had seen men of the higher classes, and of cultivated minds, wince under the most guarded and well-meant remarks regarding the condition of their native cities.

In front, and rather to the left, stretched a range of no great height : this was the Sierra de Cabra, or, more properly, Las Navas de Cabra. On its flank was situated the Sima de Cabra, one of the marvels of Andalusia, which popular tradition had invested with a mysterious interest, and made the scene of supernatural and fearful events. To this cave Cervantes alludes when he causes the Knight of the Wood to enumerate the arduous enterprises imposed on his valour by his cruel mistress ; among which he was commanded "to plunge" headlong into the Sima de Cabra (an unheard-of and dreadful attempt), and to bring her a particular relation of what is locked up in that obscure abyss.

As the road to Lucena passed within a short distance of this wonderful cavity, I struck off in order to visit it ; and having obtained the proper direction at a cortijo, proceeded to climb the hill by the path indicated. On the way, it became apparent that on these rocky and comparatively barren slopes greater pains were taken in cultivating the soil than on the richer plain below. All the loose stones were carefully collected into little mounds, in order that the plough might the more effec-



tually perform its office ; the crop, however, was scanty, and poorly rewarded the labours of the husbandman. After half an hour's climb up a gradual acclivity, we reached a spot where two perpendicular walls of rock rose up at the distance of a hundred yards from each other : between these lay a pass, that narrowed as it approached the mountain's summit, and at the highest point a dark shadow betrayed the object of our search. At the foot of a rugged cliff a yawning cavity was visible, the first glance at which revealed the true nature of a cavern, concerning whose origin legends innumerable had woven a tissue of fantastic incidents. It was the perpendicular shaft of a deserted mine, but by whom pierced and wrought, whether by Phœnicians, Carthaginians, or Romans, history furnished no information. So singular a phenomenon, therefore, as a cavity of vast depth, yawning on the lonely mountain-side, was well fitted to excite the terrors of the superstitious, and cause them to regard it as the work of magic, and the abode of unhallowed enchanter. The probability is, from the rounded form of the shaft, that it was the work of the Romans, who in mining preferred that shape, at least in Andalucia. They had carried their labours to a great depth : on dropping a pebble down, ten seconds elapsed ere it was heard to strike the bottom. About five or six yards below the surface there appeared openings in the sides, which appeared to be the entrances to horizontal galleries, necessary for the proper working of the veins.

The mystery which thus shrouded the place was heightened by many additions from popular superstition. From its mouth were said to issue infernal vapours, and at certain hours of the night flames and spectral forms were seen to hover above the dark abyss ;

and the shepherd, as he guarded his flocks, heard sounds coming from its depths like the wailing and groans of spirits in pain. But about the end of the seventeenth century there occurred a tragic event that deepened the interest connected with the Sima, and was better calculated to awaken superstitious awe than the fabulous tales previously current. As the narrative of this event, though rather prolix, affords some insight into the judicial procedure of the times, I transcribe it at full length, from the Spanish periodical in which it appeared some years ago.

In the year 1683, Don Manuel Aguilera Toledano, an inhabitant of Cabra, committed the crime of assassination by murdering Pedro de Ochoa, between whose spouse and Don Manuel a criminal intimacy existed. Aided by a friend and a servant, the assassin precipitated the corpse of Ochoa down the Sima de Cabra, where it was thought little likely that justice would seek for it. However, a rope stained with blood, that was found at its mouth, and the declaration of several herdsmen, directed the attention of the corregidor, Don Diego de Ojeda, to the spot, and in concert with the alguacil mayor of the town, he instituted the process from which the following details are extracted. After having ascertained that the Sima was 143 yards in depth, and nine in diameter at the surface, they constructed a machine over its mouth, provided with two ropes and pulleys for making the descent, which was courageously undertaken by one Fernando Muñoz Romero, a stonecutter in the town. The process then relates how the corpse was discovered. "And after the above preparations were made, the said Fernando Muñoz Romero confessed himself to the P. Fr. Miguel Serrano, of the Order of San Francisco de Assiz, and

after having received absolution, he came to the mouth of the Sima, where Melchor de Aguirre, the alguacil mayor, and other persons, had prepared a sling, in which he was seated, and by means of many thick cords and the end of the said rope, they bound him to it by the arms and breast very firmly; and having attached to the end of the other rope two lamps, each with four wicks, in presence of his worship, of many friars and clergymen, and of me, the said escribano, and of three hundred other persons, who had assembled to see what had never been told, they let go the said Fernando Muñoz, and the rope to which was affixed the lighted lamps; and the aforesaid, with great courage, and singing, descended as they let out rope into the depths of the Sima. And at the end of half an hour there was heard a voice, apparently that of the said Fernando Muñoz, which cried, 'I have found him!' and afterwards, at the end of another interval of time, there was heard another cry, which said, 'Slacken the rope of the corpse;' and at the end of another long interval, there was heard another cry from the depth of the Sima (from which they came up as from a well), which said, 'Haul!' And six men having pulled at the ropes, there appeared a bundle first, and behind it Fernando Muñoz Romero, with the lamps in one hand. And being landed, all the bystanders, along with his worship, received him with great joy; and the bundle being in the same manner landed, it was found to be a dead body, enveloped in a cloak of black and white serge, and bound with cords of esparto."

The corpse being identified as that of Ochoa, then follows the declaration of the adventurous discoverer.

"The said Fernando Muños Romero being sworn,



said that he entered the Sima, and by the light of the two lamps he carried, proceeded to examine the walls of the Sima ; and in four or five places on either side descried hollows like caves, more long than broad, very spacious, and that the end of them could not be ascertained ; and that for a considerable space the walls are of smooth stone ; and before reaching the depths the Sima enlarges and widens ; and about four fathoms from the bottom, on the right hand, were some fissures, very beautiful, and apparently wrought artificially ; from these trickled drops of very thick and cold water. And having reached the lowest part of the Sima, he rested upon a heap of earth and large stones ; and having surveyed the place, he found it was round, and as large as the interior of the church of San Dominico of Cabra. That the sides were very smooth, nor was any apartment or opening visible in them, nor any cavity in the floor by which he might descend further ; and having examined all around him, he beheld at the foot of the heap of stones a bundle, and approaching with the light, discovered it to be a corpse, lying with the face downward ; and having recognised it, he cried aloud. ‘ I have found him.’ And upon this he endeavoured to carry the body of the deceased to the top of the said heap of stones, and laying hold of it, and using all his force, he could not raise it from the ground ; and then invoking the sweet name of Our Lady of the Sierra, it appeared to him that immediately he was aided in raising it : whereupon he shouted to ‘ slacken the rope of the corpse,’ the which having carried to the top of the heap of stones, he firmly secured to the end of the rope, and then cried ‘ Haul ! ’ And furthermore, the deponent declares that the said Sima descends perpendicularly to the bottom, since on ar-

living there he saw and distinguished the people who looked over its mouth."

A description so minute as the above leaves little to be discovered by future explorers, if any shall be found desirous of winning the fame which, in Andalucia, they would be certain to reap by the descent of this well-known wonder. That it is the work of man, and not a freak of nature, is conspicuously evident; and the openings in the sides, noted by Romero, indicating the entrance into passages or galleries, such as are found in all mines, sufficiently prove that it belonged to that class of excavations, and was not a well or cistern, as is maintained by the writer who transmitted the relation I have quoted. For the latter conjecture there is no other foundation than the deceptive one of a certain resemblance to a well; while at the same time we are not informed for what object a reservoir of water was formed here, where there are no habitations, and where the remains of none exist; nor why the well was constructed near the summit of the mountain—the very worst locality for such a purpose, as is testified by the total absence of water in its depths; nor, moreover, for what reason the diameter was so unusually great as 27 feet, when a third of that width might have answered the purpose. In short, to the solution of this ingenious writer there are as many objections as to the assertion of my mozo, who, after gazing down the abyss with looks of horror and astonishment, exclaimed at last, "*Parece la boca de un infierno!*"

Resuming our route, we descended the hill by a rough track, upon which the mule ridden by the mozo tripped and fell no less than four times; and skirting the foot, which was clothed by a continuous growth of olives and fruit-trees, fell into the path that led to Lucena. It



wound in a southerly direction, through groves alternating with fields of grain; and with few intervals, such were the characteristics of the country up to the gates of that town. In England, out of those materials, shady groves and waving fields, are formed those scenes that painters love to transfer to canvas, and admiring eyes to look upon; but though the same elements are to be found in Andalucia, the reader must guard against giving them the vivid colouring and picturesque grouping that so signally characterise the landscapes of our native land. Here there is a total want of the bright verdure that beams under an English sky, and in its place a sickly hue clouds every leaf and blade of grass. A grove, especially an olive one, is a thin growth of low trees, the stems of which are hewn down into mutilated stumps, bearing a few slender boughs covered with a scanty foliage of sombre aspect. A corn-field is a vast tract of hundreds or thousands of acres, divided only by the tracks that traverse it. Overhead a fierce sun rides in a shadowless sky, and pours a hot and dazzling glare upon the cracked and parched soil; the brooks are dried up, the pasturage is sapless and withered, while an unbroken silence everywhere reigns. Such is a landscape among the campinas of Andalucia when the harvest season has advanced.

In despite, however, of its barrenness in natural beauty, one regarded the scenery with deep interest, for history told that upon these sunburnt slopes and scorched plains high and gallant deeds had been done; and one felt that every knoll and level must have witnessed the triumphs or the fall of chivalrous foemen. Baena, Cabra, and Lucena, the nearest of the towns held by Christians to the western frontier of the kingdom of Granada, were necessarily those upon which the Moor-

ish arms surged when the tide of war set in that direction. Every house, therefore, was provided with its lance and buckler; every inhabitant was a warrior, ready to sally forth when the trumpet sounded for a foray across the border, or to man the walls against some sudden incursion of his revengeful adversaries. It mattered little to these warlike communities whether or no their monarch might be at peace with their Moslem neighbours; truces and alliances brought no rest to them, for, by a singular stipulation inserted in all treaties between the Moors and Christians, it was agreed that during the cessation of general hostilities, inroads might be made upon the territories of each, provided these did not last longer than three days, and were conducted without a display of pennons or banners. Hence the district around was year after year the theatre of stirring warfare, and every summer saw armed parties setting forth upon plundering expeditions, or returning encumbered with spoil; while fierce skirmishes between them and their pursuers marked their progress, and conferred celebrity upon localities otherwise devoid of interest.

The most noted event, however, connected with the border history of these three towns, was the defeat and capture of Boabdil el Chico, the last king of Granada, by a bold attack of their garrisons and townsmen. That "unlucky" monarch, as he is styled by the Moorish chroniclers, in the hope of winning renown by some signal feat of arms, suddenly appeared one morning before the gates of Lucena, at the head of a numerous host. The brave alcaide, noways dismayed, though his garrison consisted only of a feeble band of foot and a few horsemen, contrived to amuse the enemy with negotiations for a surrender, while mes-

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sengers were dispatched to rouse the surrounding country and fortresses, and bring assistance to his relief. Shortly after midday, the forces of Cabra and Baena were descried hastening to his aid. So imminent was his danger considered by these, that lord and vassal, citizen and peasant, appeared in warlike array, and now, under the command of Don Diego de Cordova, Count of Cabra, amounted to a body of 1200 foot soldiers, all brave and tried men: they were, moreover, accompanied by 250 cavaliers of the best families in the towns. Before their arrival, the Moorish king had drawn off his forces from the assault, and sent them to the more congenial task of ravaging the surrounding country. Great was the disappointment of the gallant Count of Cabra on beholding no traces of the enemy, for he appears to have been the Hotspur of his day, and was the hero of many daring and some rash exploits; but being bent upon a passage of arms with the invaders, his scouts were sent out to discover their position: meanwhile, notwithstanding the great disparity of numbers, his little army was held in readiness for the encounter.

In a valley, between high hills, the Moorish host was espied, moving leisurely towards its own frontier, and guarding many prisoners, and beasts of burden laden with spoil. Such a position was as favourable for the onset of a small force as it was adverse to the movements of a large one; and perceiving their advantage, the Christians charged down from the heights upon the enemy below. At the first shock the ranks of the Moors were broken: and being, moreover, assailed on their flank by the alcaide of Luque, who came up with troops at that seasonable moment, their confusion increased, and in a short time their whole array was in

retreat. Thenceforward, for three leagues, the combat was only between the pursuers and the pursued, who failed not, however, to display many deeds of valour ; being stimulated by the example of their king, who was always the last to retire before the advancing Christians.

At length they reached the rivulet of Mingonzales, then swollen by recent rains. Here the horse of the monarch failed him ; and dismounting, he endeavoured to elude the pursuit by concealing himself among the shrubs and trees that lined the banks of the torrent. But his evil star prevailed : he was discovered and assailed by three soldiers of Lucena, to whom, perceiving the futility of resistance, he surrendered, and was conducted by them to their leader. Don Diego received his kingly prisoner with respect and courtesy, and without delay caused him to be conveyed to the Castle of Lucena. Thereafter the rout of the Moorish army was complete ; the victorious Christians followed them up to the walls of Loxa, the aged and valiant alcaide of which fell on that disastrous day, and along with him 5000 of the invaders, among whom were many scions of the noblest houses in Granada.

Lucena in the present day is nothing more than the capital of an agricultural district, inhabited by a rural population and some families of provincial nobility. If it formerly boasted of monuments of art, there are none now to be seen ; and its streets display the usual characteristics of Andalucian towns—an execrable pavement, gutters exhaling pestilential effluvia, and every alternate house in a dilapidated condition. It was the hour of siesta when I arrived, and of course the whole town was buried in slumber, and not a creature was stirring out of doors. About an hour before sunset,

however, the sound of voices in the street announced that the diurnal repose was at an end ; and, sallying forth, I proceeded to the dwelling of the comandante, to whom I bore a letter of introduction. In a few minutes more that courteous official had donned his evening costume, and was ready to show the way to the only relic of the past within the walls of the town. This was the castle of Lucena, as it is styled ; but its right to that imposing title is very questionable, and elsewhere it would merely be termed a fortified house. Here was confined the unlucky Boabdil, after his capture by the Count of Cabra ; and it was not fancy alone that traced in the construction of the edifice a striking resemblance to a prison. When the beholder gazes upon a dark and gloomy pile, presenting everywhere breadths of dead wall broken only by a few loop-holes or here and there a narrow window strongly grated, his first and natural impulse is to picture the interior a place of cells and dungeons, and to people them with captives, for every external feature bespeaks jealous precautions against escape. Such is the outward aspect of the castle of Lucena.

Our ramble terminated in the Alameda—that focus of mirth, love-making, and intrigue, of flashing eyes and graceful forms, of nimble tongues, rattling fans, and cavaliers “ *haciendo la rueda del pavo* ”—the resort of well-clad poverty, and stomachs pinched to purchase a “ *capa azul*.” Though small, this *al-fresco* place of assembly was superior to the general run of Alamedas in the provincial towns. In the centre stood ranks of mulberry-trees, beneath whose shade its frequenters walked ; while the sides were garnished with benches of stone, for the onlookers and the seniors of the place. As the light began to decline, groups



strolled in from its various avenues and congregated in the centre walk ; the feminine portion fanning themselves industriously, and exclaiming occasionally, "Jesus! que calor !" while their masculine friends were puffing forth volumes of smoke, and anathematizing the heat in stronger language. Then, at some understood signal, the whole party put themselves in motion, and slowly paced up and down within the limits consecrated by usage to the evening paseo. By and by the moon rose, and shone serenely upon the light-hearted throng, who presently proceeded to turn its clear light to good account ; a guitar and violin struck up under the shadow of a tree ; in a trice partners were selected, and forthwith a dozen couples commenced dancing to the monotonous music with due gravity. In Britain a quadrille is generally a solemn affair, but here it is far worse ; not because the performers feel ill at ease during their saltatory exhibition, but from the circumstance that the variety of difficult passages and shakes to which they condemn their lower members is such as can only be executed by means of much agility, and the utmost concentration of their faculties to that one purpose. Hence, no dancers upon the tight-rope can look more thoughtful and anxious than those in Spanish ball-rooms when a quadrille is in progress.

"Who is that caballero dancing with the Condesa de H——?" I inquired of the comandante.

"Un tendero," he replied.

"What ! a shopkeeper?" I exclaimed, in some astonishment. "Does, then, the 'sangre azul' in Lucena usually associate with such?"

"Not so, Señor ; this is somewhat like a public ball-room, where, as you know, any one is at liberty to claim the hand of a lady who may be disengaged ; and

if she be so, she cannot refuse to dance with him, but then the acquaintance terminates the moment the dance is over."

After an hour of this diversion, the circle dispersed, some homewards, some to tertulias; while, with a small party including three or four ladies, I repaired to a neveria, or shop where ices are dispensed, such establishments in Andalusia being generally managed by Valencians. These luxuries, so grateful in a warm climate, are obtained by means of snow, which is sometimes transported from a great distance on the backs of mules, to furnish the panting Andalusia with heladas or the cool agraz: in the present instance the article was supplied from the mountains of Ronda, and occasionally, when that source failed, from the Sierra Nevada. There is a custom connected with such social parties peculiar, I believe, to Spain. It is usual for one of the party to pay for the rest: and as the doing so is somehow or other connected with a question of precedence, it frequently happens that disputes arise respecting the honour of being thus considered master of the feast; and these, though generally amicable, have sometimes ended in serious consequences. To the stranger, however, the custom is at first rather annoying; for not only is he excepted from all obligations of this kind, but he is not even expected to contribute his share of the reckoning when he happens to be in company with Spanish friends. Indeed, to do so would be considered by most of them as an affront, and an aspersion upon their hospitality. So far do some carry their "pundonor" upon this point, that he will occasionally find, on proceeding to discharge his bill at a café, should he have entered it alone, that the mozo has already received payment from some friend among the crowd.

On the following day I started at a late hour, preferring a night-journey, with all its discomforts, to traveling exposed to a sun whose rays seemed tipped with fire. Granada, however, was the bourne: and who would not suffer some hardships to reach that city of romance and Moorish chivalry? Our path lay through a cultivated country, and conducted us by the village of Araceli; but soon the short twilight of an Andalusian summer came to an end, and further observations were then only to be gathered through the sense of hearing. The tinkling of bells and the lowing of cattle denoted that we had entered on one of the vast pasturages frequently met with in Andalusia; by and by the chimes of some church rang out on the left.

"These are the bells of Ruth," said one of the muleteers; and as if their deep tones had awakened some hungry spirit within him, he bestirred himself in drawing forth from his wallet his frugal supper. It was a hermit's fare, consisting of raisins, walnuts, and bread; yet, with the courtesy of the country, neither he nor his brother mozo would partake of it until I had helped myself to a portion.

The repast ended, the twain proceeded to turn in for the night. This they accomplished by throwing themselves across their mules with their faces downwards, and balancing themselves so that their legs were a counterpoise to their heads, which hung within a foot of the ground. "There is a main difference," said Sancho Panza, "between riding, and lying athwart like a sack of rubbish;" but my mozos knew of none: happy rogues! they slept for eight long hours without stirring from a posture that no other mortal could have maintained for as many minutes without falling a victim to a fit of apoplexy; and at the end of that time awoke

as refreshed as if their rest had been taken on the softest couch. At last the long-wished-for moon rose, after a wearisome hour of silence and darkness ; and her beams, falling on hill and valley, wrought a magical change on one's feelings. Thenceforward there was no sensation of weariness, for every turn of the path brought into view scenes and objects the effect of which was heightened tenfold by her light. Our route lay up the valley of the Genil, keeping rather to the range of mountains that formed its northern boundary than winding by the river's side. Such a track, therefore, was prolific in all those features that belong to a rugged country ; sometimes breasting steep and rocky ascents, then winding by the base of cliffs, or keeping along the brow of ravines, wherein lay gathered deepest night ; or, again, as the direction changed, disclosing glens, into whose depths the light shone full, and was reflected by streams sparkling and quivering as they hurried over their rocky beds. These were for hours the sights that kept attention awake, till at length the moon sank beneath the horizon, and darkness again enveloped the prospect, then came the cold half-hour that announces the approach of dawn ; and when day appeared we found ourselves descending to the banks of a stream by a hollow way between high cliffs. On the opposite side they rose stained of a deep red colour, and overhung an ancient mill, whose rude appearance was in perfect keeping with the character of its site, which was as wild and lonely as could be imagined. When, however, we had left this stream half a league behind us, and had been ferried across the sluggish waters of the Genil, the scenery, both around and in front, bore witness to the proximity of the Vega of Granada, upon which it bordered. The slopes became gentler, the valley, though



still narrow, more cultivated; and vineyards clung to the sides of the hills, while the margin between their roots and the listless river was occupied by fields of yellow grain. Our path was, as usual in such a region, deep sunk between hedges of aloes, or the uncouth prickly pear, and a vehicle would have found much difficulty in traversing it; yet this was the sole access to the vega from the west, had been the highway of generations for ages past, and was still as rude as when it bore Christian and Moor to battle. At length Loxa came in sight; our animals quickened their pace, and made their way without guidance to the inn, where, on the usual couch—a mattress laid on the floor—I betook myself to rest, at an hour when most people are quitting theirs.

The same evening we were passing up the Vega of Granada, our animals no longer slipping and scrambling among rocky passes, as had been their fate the preceding night, but soberly stepping along the level plain at an easy pace. What a transition from the iron-featured country of last night! We seemed now to be launched upon an inland sea of verdure; to the right and left the green expanse spread up to the rugged shores that encircled it, filling every indentation in their outline with verdure, surging with its waves of vegetation upon the bold promontories that came out into the plain, and then sweeping onwards towards the east in masses of luxuriance that ended only where a stupendous mountain-pile rose against the eastern horizon. This was the Sierra Nevada, towering in majesty above every surrounding elevation, and in grandeur and desolation far surpassing the minor sierras, as well as in the loftiness of its dark peaks. The fertility of the soil was marvellous; and as we pursued our way among vegeta-



tion so exuberant as to realise all that one could conceive of tropical richness, it was easy to understand how this oasis of verdure seemed an earthly paradise of delights to the Moor, and why he clung so fondly to his beloved vega. From morning to night he might spur his Arab courser over its level surface, and find no spot unoccupied by plant or tree; groves of fruit-trees and oranges diversified the blooming garden, and threw over it the charm of perpetual summer; refreshing rills crossed it in a thousand channels; the air was perfumed with the breath of fragrant shrubs and flowers; and, as if to heighten the scene by contrast, and render his perception of its beauties more exquisite, he had only to raise his eyes to the environing wilderness of sierras to behold a spectacle of hopeless sterility.

All night long we continued to traverse, under the mild effulgence of the moon, the well-beaten track that led to the city; and when morning overtook us as we emerged from the town of Santa Fe, I strained my vision to catch a glimpse of its walls, for I knew that they could not be far distant. I was directing my eyes along the plain without being successful in the search, when looking accidentally a little higher, I beheld a line of darkened walls and massive towers of the same hue, encircling the summit of a spur projecting from the sierra: this was the fortress of the Alhambra, and at the base of its precipitous sides a mingled mass of white walls, brown roofs, spires, domes, and foliage, marked the site of the city it protected. And now this stream we are crossing is the Genil, renowned in song; and soon we are passing along the narrow streets of the Moorish capital, amid gateways, horse-shoe arches, and a thousand vestiges of its ancient masters, till at length

the Fonda de Comercia brings us to a stand. My alforjas are pitched on the ground, the muleteers dismissed ; and, covered with dust, I follow a waiter to a chamber where in one corner there is an apology for a bed ; and here I speedily forget the fatigues and aches inseparable from passing the watches of the night, as well as those of the morning, upon the back of a snail-paced mule.

## CHAPTER XV.

GRANADA.—THE ALHAMBRA.—THE VEGA.—DON E——.

IT was only on the following day that I visited the Alhambra. Awaking in the morning, refreshed and invigorated, I felt no longer “hecho pedazos,” as on the day before, and unfit for any undertaking more weighty than a stroll on the salon; but with nerves new strung, and spirits rising with the thought of realising many an ardent longing, I set out alone on my pilgrimage. And without somewhat of a pilgrim’s feelings one can scarcely look up to those sunburnt towers; for the Alhambra is to the traveller in Andalusia, what the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem is to the pilgrim—the climax of all that is interesting in the surrounding region. It is difficult, therefore, for him to approach it without feeling those quickened emotions that arise when we are on the eve of beholding an object that has long occupied a large share of our thoughts and fancies. Wherever his wandering steps have turned, he has observed innumerable traces of a people whose works proclaim them to have been great; a people at once warlike and industrious, uniting with the virtues of a rude age the laborious spirit of modern communities, no less capable of conceiving than of executing grand projects; sumptuous in their tastes and pleasures, yet passionately fond of nature, and wonderfully ingenious in adapting the knowledge of their times

to practical purposes and the uses of society. All this he reads in those memorials of their hands that still strew the surface of their lost dominions; and when History opens her volume, and tells him that they who entered the land as conquerors were not mere men of violence, but a polished and courteous people, excelling their contemporaries in many branches of science and learning, and, despite the operation of a false creed whose ruling principle was prejudice and bigotry, were chivalrous and gallant to their foes, his curiosity and interest are in no common degree aroused as he draws nigh to the proudest monuments of their varied powers they have bequeathed to time. The citadel of their most renowned monarchy, the scene of their last struggles and expiring glories, the seat of the highest triumphs of their art are now to be revealed to him. All these reflections bring with them a crowd of sensations that send him, in a state of excited feeling, to which perhaps he has been long a stranger, to gaze upon the wonders of the Alhambra.

After traversing some ancient streets, I entered a large square, surrounded by lofty houses of Moorish aspect; it was the Bibarrambla, celebrated in many a ballad as the place where the Moorish chivalry held their jousts and tournaments, and hurled the jereed at each other in sport, or engaged in the more perilous pastime of the bull-fight. A dark street opens into it, whose name is familiar as a household word; it is the Zacatin, once filled with the richest merchandise of the East and southern Spain, and alive with crowds of turbaned merchants. Then we pass into the Plaza Nueva, and taking advantage of the open space to look around, the eye is at once arrested by the massive proportions of that tower that rises grim and

rampant from its elevated site, and looks down frowningly upon the city at its feet. This is the tower of the Bell, and one of the bulwarks of the Alhambra. And now, having climbed the steep street of the Gomeles, we enter by a gateway a "bosky dell," diversified with walks and fountains, and overhung on the left by the swarthy walls of the fortress. Turning up one of these paths, we stand before its chief entrance, the spacious Gate of Justice. Upon the key-stone of its horse-shoe arch is sculptured, in relief, an open hand, emblematical of the all-creative power of the Deity whom the Mussulman worshipped; and passing through the archway, which serves as a guard-room for a few superannuated veterans, we ascend between high and blank walls to an esplanade, bounded by edifices of various ages and architecture. The observer now surveys on all sides the fortifications of an ancient citadel—gigantic square towers, gloomy walls, massive gateways; and perceives that his preconceived notions regarding the Alhambra have led him astray as to its real character. Properly speaking, it is a fortress, embracing within its red walls the whole summit of the spur on which it is situated: within lies a hamlet, provided with its church, convent, Alameda, and all other essentials of a village; mingled with these are ancient Moorish dwellings, the unfinished palace of Charles V., and an edifice lowly and unpretending in its exterior, but whose riches of internal splendour defy description—the far-famed palace of the Moorish monarchs.

From the Tower of the Bell, which, as I have mentioned, overlooks the city, the eye ranges over a panorama unrivalled in the vastness of its extent, the variety of objects it embraces, and the contrast of colours that clothe its surface. Tawny mountains swell up against



the horizon in all directions, broken and tumultuous as the waves of a stormy sea ; within the wild outlines lies the vega, smooth and placid as a land-locked haven ; here and there its surface is chequered by the yellow tints of harvest, or the whitened walls of villages or towns, but the groundwork is that verdure which, amid the glare of other colours and a glowing sky, is as refreshing to vision as the cup of cold water to parched lips. Dazzled and confused by other objects, the eye finds in it a place of rest ; and after dwelling on it with delight, returns with renewed strength to trace out the other features of the prospect.

Looking directly downwards, the city comes into view. No map could give a better insight into its position and arrangement than a glance from this lofty tower, which, from the peculiarity of its situation, commands nearly the whole mass of dwellings below. It rises on the extreme point of the spur occupied by the Alhambra ; and as the latter is many hundred feet above the city, no better post could be found for observing how street and square are spread out. On either hand is visible an elevation that runs out from the sierra and forms a ridge, like that on which the Alhambra stands, but far less bold and aspiring. That to the right is the Albaycin, renowned in the latter days of Moorish Granada as the quarter of the city where Boabdil the Unlucky fortified and maintained himself during his contest with his father. Between it and the Alhambra lies a deep ravine, at the bottom of which runs the Darro ; and from the bed of the river the houses rise roof above roof, mingled in picturesque confusion with gardens and foliage, till they surmount the crest of the ridge and spread over its exterior slope. On the corresponding height to the left, which is

neither so considerable nor so noted as the Albaycin; are seen the Torres Bermejas, or red towers, which claim a remote antiquity: in the space between these elevations the mass of the city may be said to be. Its extremities, however, do not terminate at the base of each height, but on the one hand extend irregularly round the Torres Bermejas, interspersed with groves and terraces; and on the other clothe, as I have remarked, the slopes of the Albaycin, and climb the narrow valley of the Darro.

Looking towards the sierra, in order to do which it is necessary to turn one's back to the city, the prospect embraces, besides the fortifications and dwellings of the Alhambra in the foreground, all that is most characteristic of Andalusian mountain scenery. Immediately in front are the wooded slopes in which the Generalife stands embosomed; to the left and higher up, the deep glen through which the Darro descends; on the verge of its precipitous banks hang white edifices surrounded with groves, and from thence the acclivities swell upwards in naked and barren loneliness, unbroken by crag or cliff or a single feature of interest.

Looking towards the right, the eye passes over the leafy hollow that conducts to the Gate of Justice, and rests upon the towering peaks of the Sierra Nevada. Language would convey but a faint conception of the sublimity of the prospect there unfolded. Soaring to the highest altitude of European chains, rose a magnificent mountain-range, carved as it were out of ebony, and wrapped in eternal shadows. Its enormous masses embraced every variety of fantastic peak and summit, and stretched away to the southward in undiminished grandeur. In the midst of this mighty rampart stood the monarchs of the scene, the Picacho de la Veleta

and Mulanacen, towering like Titans above a growth of giants. Their lofty sides, cloven by tremendous chasms, and surrounded by steeps, seemed to forbid a resting-place to the foot, and to deny access to their summits, which shot upwards dark and sullen. From these had disappeared their wintry hoods of snow, and each pinnacle lifted its head blackened like all below by the wrath of tempests and the fire of unnumbered summers. One vestige of winter alone remained on the forehead of the Picacho, where, sheltered in a deep ravine, a snow-wreath lingered, and reflected in dazzling brightness the sunbeams as they crossed its surface. This solitary speck of white was the last trace of the snowy mantle the peaks assume in winter; as summer advances, they shake it off from their crests and flanks, which then re-appear in the drapery of dark colours natural to their rugged outlines.

Descending from the tower, I sought my way to the palace of the Alhambra, and found admittance. To come fresh from contemplating the savage grandeur of nature, was to put the feeble works of man to the severest test to which they could be subjected: yet, making due allowances, the founders of that pile might freely boast of the work of their hands. It is not my intention to describe a structure with which the public are well acquainted by the productions of abler pens than mine; it is enough to say that words fail to give any idea of its bewildering effect upon the senses. It is the *beau idéal* of a voluptuous Elysium; a scene to which every source of earthly enjoyment is summoned, and not in vain, to captivate and enthrall the heart by lulling and soothing it to rest. And in a climate where inaction is frequently compulsory, and at times a necessity, how exquisitely adapted were those allure-

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ments that delight the stranger's eye, to banish the care and thought inseparable from our hours of tranquillity! The Albaycin might be in open rebellion, the Christian might be wasting the beautiful vega with fire and sword, the alciades of the kingdom might be usurping the royal authority; but what were these disasters to him who could wander from marble hall to blooming garden, and surrender himself to the enchantment created by their vivid play of colours and the exquisite variety of their embellishments; or pillowed on luxurious ease, and fanned by the perfume of the orange-flower, sink into forgetfulness while the murmur of fountains fell pleasantly on the ear? The great charm, indeed, of the palace lies in its tendency to absorb the mind in dreamy contemplation. Everything ministers to that end: the long colonnades of slender pillars that hang like stalactites round the courts; the dim twilight of the lofty saloons; the delicate fretwork embossed upon their walls, and provoking the eye to unravel its mazes; the splash of fountains "singing a quiet tune;" all these produce that mixture of illusion and reality which transports the thoughts into the world of reveries and day-dreams. And if such be the effect of the scene shorn as it is of its ancient splendours, how much more powerful must its charms have been when there mingled with them the still-life that peoples an Eastern court; when the chivalry of the kingdom filled the ante-chambers, and mute attendants glided to and fro through the deserted walks, and the voice and smile of beauty were breathing their soft spells around!

Is it to be wondered at that each scion of royal blood counted this the summit of his desires; that he broke every tie of kindred, allegiance, or gratitude, to make it his own; and that when he attained it with hands



stained with blood, he forgot, as with few exceptions, did the later monarchs of Granada, in the baleful attractions of his palace, that his dominions were torn by misrule and dissension, and, slowly but surely, sinking beneath the arms of the Christians? It can hardly be doubted that the Alhambra contributed no little to the downfall of the Moslem kingdom: no man can behold its varied delights without confessing that they must have shed an enervating and deadening influence upon all within their sphere, and, however sparingly enjoyed, have been fatal to spirit and energy.

One of my first occupations was to procure apartments, not in this royal residence, for it is now forbidden to devote them to the accommodation of private individuals, but in one of the dwellings within the walls of the fortress. This was no difficult matter, as there are several houses of the description I required within its precincts; and on the following day I found myself installed in one—the property, by the way, of an English baronet, and situated close to the Arco del Vino. Its erection was probably coeval with the days of the Moors; but time, or the taste of subsequent occupants, had stripped it of every peculiarity of their architecture, except the small Moorish casements of the upper story. Here I lodged in a spacious apartment that overlooked the interior of the fortress; and every morning sallied forth to wander, with no definite object in view, among the existing memorials of its Moslem masters; sometimes from a high battlement watching the flight of morning from the east, to see it light upon the city below and steal along the plain; or descending by the northern gate to the Albaycin, roam through that ancient stronghold of turbulence; or turning up the course of the Darro, pursue the path



to the secluded college of Monte Santo. During the noontide heat, when occupation out of doors is necessarily suspended, and one is confined a close prisoner to the house, I had a never-failing resource against ennui in beholding from one of the windows a magnificent prospect of the Vega and the Sierra Nevada. The enchanting verdure of the former never palled upon the eye: none but those who have dwelt under cloudless skies, and exposed to the full force of an unshadowed sun, can understand how often the exercise of vision becomes under the glare of light physically painful, and how much to be appreciated is a spot of green upon which the sight may rest. Here, while the air was quivering with heat, and nearer objects appeared to glow, there was a broad expanse that reflected no dazzling sunbeams, and permitted the eye to dwell long upon its shady masses of verdure. And while a breathless stillness reigned around, and the city was wrapped in the silence of the grave, bespeaking, like the rocky and desolate mountain-chains in the distance, the exhaustion of nature, how cheering was it to behold a prospect wherein nothing drooped, and where stalk and leaf were flourishing in the utmost vigour of vegetable life! Indeed, the luxuriance of the Vega seemed almost the work of magic, so far was it from being affected by the burning and blighting influence which in every other direction had reduced the soil to sterility, and thrown a brown and arid tinge upon mountain and valley. Then at sunset I descended the Calle de los Gomeles, sure to find the streets alive with population, for the disappearance of the sun is the signal for all who can walk or crawl to emerge from house and cottage and enjoy the freshness of evening. In general the lower orders sat with their families at

the doors of their dwellings, the men smoking their *papelitos*, and the whole circle watching the *beau monde* wending its way to the Alameda. A stranger, however closely he may conform to the costume of the country, is quickly detected, and one hears the word "*Ingles*" pass from mouth to mouth on nearing these groups. This is their mode of *tomando el fresco*; that of the higher ranks again is only a shade less sedentary, its desires being bounded by the limits of the public paseo, beyond which the *señoritas* and their cavaliers scrupulously refrain from passing. From thence, the promenaders retire to the various *café*s and *neverias*, to sip ices or the delicious *agraz*, and afterwards to fill the *tertulias* to which they may have the right of admission. One drawback only accompanies a residence in the Alhambra. As it is a fortress, and provided with a slender garrison, the routine of military discipline is accordingly enforced, and at ten o'clock at night the gates are closed. After this hour admission is difficult—I do not say impossible, for these ancient gates will readily unclose to a silver key if judiciously applied; but the difficulty consists in rousing the warders, who, being superannuated soldiers, are either too sleepy or too deaf to heed any but the loudest knockings and assaults upon their venerable charge. This inconvenience excepted, I do not know a more delightful quarter in Granada than the castle of its former lords. Here the traces of innovating hands are less perceptible than in the city below; and one finds no difficulty in forming a pretty accurate notion of what was its strength and grandeur under the Moorish domination. Besides this, there are varied and extensive prospects to be enjoyed from its massive towers; the most noted of other Moorish monuments are close

at hand; and, last but not least, one is spared the fatigue of climbing the steep approach from the city, an undertaking of no small moment and toil under an almost vertical sun.

One of the pleasures to which I had looked forward on approaching Granada was the prospect of conversing with some of my countrymen, whom I made sure of meeting there; for after some months' abstinence I felt a decided longing to hear myself talk in my mother tongue. It is true I laboured under no apprehensions of having forgotten it, having had proof to that effect in Cordova, where, on rescuing two English tourists from a dilemma brought on by their own ignorance of Spanish, I had the gratification of hearing one marvel to the other, "How well the —— Spaniard spoke English!" My sage compatriots jumped to the conclusion that he who wore a sombrero, chaqueta, and a faja girded round him, must perforce be a native of Spain; whereas the youngest urchins on the streets eyed one with a look expressive of their having discovered that the wearer of their national costume was no "viejo Christiano," but a stranger from a distant land. It was therefore with considerable satisfaction that, one morning, on calling upon an ex-alcaide of the city, I bowed to a personage whom the worthy dignitary presented as Don E——, and a countryman. The appearance of my new acquaintance was one of those which, once seen, are not soon forgotten. I recognised him immediately, although the only occasion on which I had seen him occurred many months previously, and then only for a few minutes. Having entered a book-seller's shop in Seville in quest of a work, I found the master of the shop seated at a chess-table along with the individual who now stood before me. My inquiry



was unsatisfactory; but during our brief colloquy, I caught a glimpse of certain features in the background that struck me as being strangely and whimsically put together. The countenance was sallow, very angular in its outlines, and deeply marked by small-pox; while from behind a pair of spectacles a couple of lynx-like eyes shot searching glances. Let the reader place this singular visage upon the most meagre and slender form he has ever beheld, and he has a pretty accurate description of Don E——'s outward man. Further acquaintance, which he was not slow to cultivate, brought to light his various accomplishments. Among these it was a singularity, that although professing to be exclusively a military character, he possessed a more than respectable knowledge of medicine. He was, besides, a perfect master of Spanish, which he wrote and spoke admirably; and was endowed with the gift of conversation in an eminent degree. So much for the bright side of Don E——'s character. In regard to the dark portion, truth compels me to state that a great deal more might be said. In the first place, a more wandering tongue it had never been my lot to meet. Its audacity exceeded belief. Mention the name of a public character or a personage of distinction, and it immediately proclaimed its owner to have been on intimate terms with the exalted individuals. Whether they were statesmen, orators, nobles, poets, or actors, mattered little to Don E——; to all and each he had borne company, and could pour forth, off-hand, a host of anecdotes to prove his intimacy with them. To this weakness he added another of a less diverting kind. He had an unpleasant habit of borrowing money on the strength of remittances expected, but which somehow or other never arrived; and, in short, Don

E—— lived upon his wits and his friends. To the credit of his Spanish ones be it spoken, they bore this failing with a grace which, if it be characteristic of the nation, must make it the admiration of all *chevaliers d'industrie*.

The most curious fact connected with this individual was the mystery that enveloped his origin and the country of his birth. His own account, of course, was not to be credited; and all the other indications that might furnish a clue were wholly at fault. His name was Scotch, his accent English, while the frequent use of Irish idioms bespoke him to have resided long in the Emerald Isle. This much, however, of his history was authentic: that he was engaged in the British Legion—in what capacity it is doubtful—and left that service for reasons best known to himself; subsequently entered the Spanish army, and held the rank of sous-lieutenant, which he also resigned for private reasons; and had since then been roaming through Spain, with no ostensible purpose or employment. During his service in the Legion he had the misfortune to be taken prisoner by the Carlists, of whose brutalities to himself, and others as unfortunately situated, he was in the habit of communicating shocking details. To this story I had always turned an incredulous ear, thinking it a fiction, like many others, until, on returning to England, I read the narrative of an officer of the British Marines who happened to be made a prisoner by the Carlists. From this I learnt that Don E—— had actually been captured, and that this part of the story was no fabrication.

Every day that I climbed the steep Calle de los Gomeles, under a hot and fierce sun, my eyes turned instinctively to the dark summit of the Picacho de la



Veleta, from whose brow there hung, like a jewel, the snowy speck I have already described. It was peculiarly tantalising, while oppressed by the stifling atmosphere of the street, to look up to its glittering surface, and know it was the centre of cool breezes, the faintest breath from which would have banished every sensation of languor, and sent one up the steep with the step of a mountaineer. As, however, these cool airs refused to quit their ancient seat on the mountain-top even for a moment, there was no other resource than to seek them there, and for once inhale a reviving draught in the midst of a torrid land. This project I had been prevented by various causes from putting into execution until I had become acquainted with Don E——. No sooner did that personage hear of my determination than he bestirred himself to aid it, and proved, indeed, a useful auxiliary. Nobody knew better than he where the best guide and the best mules were to be procured; and having laid in a store of provender for the expedition, we commenced our journey in the afternoon of a hot and cloudless day.

## CHAPTER XVI.

THE PICACHO DE LA VELETA.—ASCENT OF IT.—GALE AMONG THE MOUNTAINS.—MAGNIFICENT PROSPECT FROM THE SUMMIT.—LA ZUBIA.—THE RESTLESS SKULL.—THE NUNS.—ROUTE TO MALAGA.—A GALERA.—THE SPANISH MASTIFF.—GUARDAS DEL CAMINO.

As the Picacho is accessible by a bridle-track to within half-a-mile of its summit, the plan of the ascent was to proceed to the station of the neveros, near the snowy wreath from which they filled their panniers; having reached this, which we expected to do shortly after sunset, we were to spend the night there, and on the following morning, at earliest dawn, to commence the ascent of the loftiest peak. It was absolutely essential, in order to enjoy an uninterrupted prospect from the summit, that we should reach it at an early hour, for at midday, and even sooner, the surface of the country would be shrouded from view by the exhalations that rise from the valleys and plains, and diffuse themselves through the atmosphere. Considering, however, that only half-a-mile of the ascent remained to be performed on foot after starting from our resting-place, we reckoned with certainty upon accomplishing the distance in little more than an hour.

A short ride from the outskirts of the city brought us to the swelling roots of the mighty sierra, which from this point gradually sloped upwards for more than twenty miles, till it attained its highest elevation. Here on leaving the fertile vega, there was no imperceptible

transition from the prodigal abundance of a rich plain into the less fruitful cultivation of mountain acclivities. Sterility encompassed us from the moment our animals began to breast the rocky pathway; and looking upwards, the scenery wore the same aspect, impressed in bolder characters: dark, lowering crags, shivered peaks, and stony ranges pierced by gaps and ravines, denoted a region abandoned to desolation. Still it had its green spots; as our track generally led along the crest of elevated ridges, the eye from this vantage ground commanded the interior of the valleys on either side, and occasionally penetrated into the depths of others more remote. Some were beautifully green, and possessed their foaming brooks, along whose banks a few tall poplars were picturesquely sprinkled; one or two, again, were diversified by mountain hamlets, whose appearance in the heart of this rocky wilderness presented a picture of industry and content joined to an air of utter seclusion. A few houses grouped irregularly together—the church or ermita at one end, some straggling huts perched upon projecting crags, a thread of verdure stealing down the valley—these constituted a picture of peace, silence, and perhaps happiness, the effect of which, surrounded by its dusky frame of frowning ridges, was indescribably striking. At every step, however, that carried us upwards, such glimpses became less frequent, and for leagues we continued to toil among the wildest mountain scenery it is possible to conceive. The twilight of the southern skies then drew abruptly to a close; and while the failing light rendered our progress along the rugged track more than ordinarily slow, the wind began to rise, or, to speak more correctly, we began to ascend into a region where for the time being it was holding its boisterous

revels. On the summits of the unsheltered ridges, and in the narrow gorges between them, the gusts blew furiously, and withal roared so loud as to drown our voices even when we shouted to each other. At one precipitous slope, which scarcely afforded footing for our mules, the "burro" that carried our load of provender made a false step, and stumbled. Before it could recover itself a sudden blast poured down from the heights, and in an instant the poor animal was overpowered, and hurled on its side with a crash that boded havoc to our stock of edibles. Luckily the mozo held on stoutly by the halter, and succeeded in keeping its head to wind; and then the rest of us scrambling down to where it lay helpless and passive, raised it by main force, and pushed it up the ascent. This caused some delay, and when success had crowned our exertions the last traces of light had disappeared; notwithstanding the darkness, however, we struggled onwards, sometimes in sheltered nooks making good progress, but on the bleak ridges engaged in a stubborn contest with the wind, that threatened to launch us over the precipices that dropped away on either side. At length, when we were about to choose a place of bivouac for the night, as further progress on the verge of chasms was becoming a work of danger, on turning an angle of a rock Juanico descried a faint light; this he pronounced to proceed from the station of the neveros. The sight was peculiarly welcome, as, in addition to the difficulties of the path, the wind blew keenly, and we were both wearied and cold: pushing on, therefore, at a brisker pace, we arrived within a short distance of the spot where the light had been seen. The track, however, instead of leading direct to it, seemed to proceed along the ridge on which we



stood, and showed no indications of turning down into the hollow, at the bottom of which, and some distance to the left, was burning the fire that first attracted our notice. Unable to find a way, we shouted out for directions to guide us down the slope, the surface of which, one could plainly discern, was covered with huge blocks of stone. For some minutes the call was unanswered by those whom we supposed to be in charge of the station; at length a blaze of light burst forth from the spot, and illuminated a wide circle around it. The effect, under the circumstances, was peculiarly fine: in the centre was a dark figure, holding up the flaming brand, from which the wind carried a long train of sparks; behind him the mountain remained in undisturbed gloom, while the rude masses of rock in front cast strange shadows towards us: then the light sank with the same suddenness with which it appeared, and left the scene apparently involved in thicker darkness.

Our arrival was the cause of no slight astonishment to the solitary individual in possession of the fire: the sight of travellers was to him a rare event, as few but neveros ever pay these regions a visit; and when strangers did make their appearance, it was usually during the hours of light. He did his best, however, to make us comfortable, and placed his house at our disposal—if indeed that could be called a house which boasted of the skies for a roof, and consisted merely of a low wall encircling a fire placed on the ground. Round the interior ran a sort of divan, constructed of earth and sharp pointed stones, which served as a sleeping place at night. Upon this, wrapped in my manta, and with a huge water-melon for a pillow, I stretched myself, and speedily forgot in slumber the fatigues of the day. During the night I awoke several times, to hear the



wind howling fearfully around the nearest summits. As one or two cold blasts swept into our sheltered hollow, scattering the embers of the fire, and, in spite of cloaks and wrappings, sending a freezing chill into one's bones, I learnt to appreciate the advantages of a roof; and certain opinions I expressed on a former occasion, respecting the pleasures of spending a night under the canopy of heaven, underwent a decided change. When morning broke, the gale had increased to a hurricane. Its fury, only partially felt in the narrow ravine in which we lay, was plainly visible upon the exposed flanks of the surrounding ridges; such shrubs as found a footing on the rocky surfaces were seen to be bent flat to the ground, and from time to time large stones dislodged by the wind came rolling down the acclivities. In such weather it would have been dangerous to have mounted the Picacho, upon whose sides the wind beat with unbroken force—to say nothing of the extreme probability that, on reaching the summit, the prospect would be obscured by clouds and mists from the disturbed waters of the Mediterranean. My determination, therefore, was to wait until the gale showed some signs of abating, before I ventured higher up; and if it did not lull before the following day, then at all hazards to make the attempt rather than return *re infectâ*. The next question was how to beguile this interval of doubtful duration; for although the novelty of spending a day at an altitude of ten thousand feet above the sea was sufficiently pleasing, it required something more than this to prevent the hours from hanging heavy on our hands in the midst of the dreary scenery that encircled our retreat. Fortunately, the day previous I had received a packet of newspapers; and not having leisure to read them then, had brought them with me, in the expecta-

tion of finding some unoccupied moments for glancing at their contents. Now they served us in good stead, particularly as the nevero conducted us to an abode where we might read in positive comfort. The evening before, he had informed us that there was a "cueva" near, which was at our service, should we prefer passing the night there rather than in the open air. The word "cueva," however, which signifies a "cave," suggested the image of some "antre vast," dripping with icy dews; and under this impression we retained our positions by the fire-place, as being preferable to the damp couch that such an asylum promised. Now, however, it appeared that the "cueva" was the work of man, instead of a natural excavation in the mountain side; it was a construction resembling in form a huge beehive, and was situated in the ravine about fifty yards from our resting-place. A rude mass it was of stones and clay, only distinguishable from the blocks around by the rounded shape given it by its builders: in that point as well as in the nature of the entrance they seemed to have imitated the architecture of the industrious insects I have named, for admittance was only to be effected by crawling on hands and knees through an aperture left on one side. Here, reclining luxuriously on the straw with which the floor was covered, we listened with unconcern to the roaring of the blast, and could have defied the pelting of the storm had it come, for the place was perfectly water-tight. Moreover there were within our citadel no internal foes to peace; at that great elevation the insect plagues of Spain cease to exist, or at all events to molest; and thus it falls to my lot to boast of an event which it would be difficult for many natives or strangers to parallel—viz., that I spent a whole day in Spain unmolested by the assault either of pulga

or chinche. It was a day to be noted with a white mark.

Towards evening the violence of the wind subsided a little; and hailing this as a favourable omen, I resolved to move higher up the mountain to another hut, which the neveros had constructed for their convenience. My determination was sincerely regretted by our friend of the cueva, who, as I had allowed him unrestricted access to the store of provender, had spent half the day in frying rashers of bacon, and was exceedingly loth to desist from so agreeable an occupation. He readily, however, pointed out the track, which first crossed a ravine filled with snow, and from which the neveros filled their panniers, and then led up by a small rill fed by the melting of the snows higher up. Its banks were carpeted with a narrow margin of pale green sward, but, this excepted, no other trace of vegetation diversified the surface of brown rock that everywhere met the eye; it elevated itself around us sometimes into precipitous crags, but oftener into heaps of stony masses resembling gigantic walls overthrown and crumbling into ruins. At the head of a ravine we found the resting-place of which we were in quest. This was merely an overhanging ledge of rock, before which the neveros had raised a wall of loose stones; but, such as it was, its shelter was eagerly accepted, as the cold after nightfall was such that our warmest coverings excluded it with difficulty. Daylight was, therefore, a signal that brought the whole party with wonderful alacrity to their feet, or rather knees, for only by such a mode of progression was the exit from our den to be made. Juanico then kindled a fire and prepared "something hot" for breakfast, while we endeavoured by brisk motion to restore some animation to our limbs, cramped



and chilled by contact with the rocky and uneven floor upon which we had passed the night. Looking upwards to the Picacho, the ascent seemed devoid of dangerous obstacles; there were no yawning chasms to skirt, nor did I perceive a single ravine intervening between its towering summit and the spot where I stood; all was an uninterrupted rise, characterised by the usual feature of becoming more steep and precipitous at the highest point of elevation. Setting out in advance, I followed a track worn by the neveros, which, after ascending among massive fragments of rock for a quarter of a mile, was lost beneath a field of snow that spread round the base of the loftiest pinnacle that remained to be surmounted.

A little to the left there appeared some traces of a track; and pursuing this, which skirted the snowy field I have described, I found it led along the brow of a precipice, presenting a clear drop of several hundred feet. On the summit of this ran a narrow terrace, bounded on the right hand by a perpendicular wall of prodigious height, while the limited space between this and the abyss on the left was diminished one-half by a high bank of snow. This the breath of summer had melted in such a way that it overhung its base, and formed a half arch over one's head. For this reason it was necessary to proceed warily, lest by the displacement of a stone, or by a sound louder than usual, I should bring down the glittering roof as I passed under it, and be hurled along with the avalanche into the gulf below. In other respects, although the ground underfoot was moist and slippery from the melting of the snow, and sloped towards the precipice more decidedly than was agreeable, there were no dangers which ordinary caution could not obviate. It was only at one

or two points, where projecting buttresses from the wall narrowed the pathway to a ledge scarcely a foot in breadth, that one felt inclined to hold one's breath, for at these spots a slip or false step would have been destruction. After proceeding thus cautiously for a hundred yards, I discovered that my labour had been in vain; the ledge terminated in a natural ladder of rock, that descended by break-neck steps to the rocky depths far below. I was, however, far from regretting this unforeseen termination to the route I had chosen, for it had conducted me to a position where a spectacle of unequalled grandeur burst upon the sight. In front rose a semicircular precipice to the height of many hundred feet, being, in fact, a continuation of the wall of rock on my right, which now swept round with a noble curve to the left. Everywhere its sides were as perpendicular as if the plumb-line had been applied to them; and the foundations were hidden in an enormous mass of snow, whose unsullied purity contrasted strangely with the gloomy pile with which it was in contact. Round the summit of this vast amphitheatre rose a series of pinnacles of unequal height, the least of them exceeding a pyramid in bulk, among which the giant form of the Picacho towered conspicuously.

Turning back from this magnificent scene, I wended my steps along the terrace to the snowy field from which I had diverged, where I found Juanico waiting, and in some perplexity regarding the cause of my disappearance from view. Crossing the snow, our course lay directly up the steep face of the peak, which was here thickly covered with debris and massive blocks of micaceous schist, the material of which the upper part of the mountain is composed. Our progress could only be made by leaping from one mass to another—an



exertion that speedily became excessively fatiguing, and compelled us to pause at every ten yards of the ascent to recover breath and strength. At the same time the wind blew keenly, and easily penetrated the light summer clothing I wore, so that at the conclusion of such halts I found myself partially frozen. On this account I felt by no means inclined to linger by the way, and accordingly half an hour's strenuous efforts placed me on the summit of the peak. Following the example of Juanico, who had preceded me, I crept into a fissure of the rock; and there safely moored against the violence of the wind, had abundant opportunity to contemplate the prospect.

My first impulse was to look down the terrific precipice, on the brink of which I stood. The reader will easily picture to himself my position by imagining a circular wall eight hundred feet in height, on the coping of which I was steadying myself. Perhaps, also, he can enter into the mingled sensations of awe and wonder with which I looked into this yawning void, and regarded the colossal proportions of its barriers. Age had not scooped it out by the slow process of decay, but it appeared to have been cloven out of the mountain top by the stroke of a hand mightier than the elements; its sides, sheer and steep, were as sharp-edged as on the day they parted asunder; and all that time could effect was to blacken them, and thus fill the gulf they embraced with a gloom and savage dreariness it is difficult for words to describe.

The view, however, from the "earth-o'ergazing summit" of a lofty peak, though it draws the vision downwards, is one that makes our thoughts take an upward flight. Heaven above, earth beneath, and boundless space around—I know not what may stir the spirit

more than such a spectacle. To see on the one hand that world we call our own receding, as it were, into the distance, and on the other the broad threshold of immensity stretching out before us, awakens a host of feelings of overpowering force. We are standing on the confines of an upper world: no nearer may we stand in our mortal state: and urged by this thought, how intently does the eye scan the vault above it, as if it could catch a glimpse of the wonders so mysteriously hidden! But the mighty firmament baffles inquiry; the volume shall not open till the scales of mortality drop from our eyes. And then with what thrilling emotion does one look down upon the high places around, feeling that we behold them as they are seen by Heaven! How glorious to see the deepest recesses of this mountain world disclosed to view, as if a veil had been withdrawn from it; and with supernatural ease to pry into the depths of its narrowest gorges, its most hidden nooks, and trace the shape of its most inaccessible peaks!

It seems impossible for the smallest rock in that vast assemblage to lurk unseen, so searching is the power of vision with which one feels gifted. And then the sense of utter loneliness and isolation—the consciousness that here the shadow of no earthly thing can fall across one—that every sight and sound are Nature's alone—all this mingles with the other emotions awakened, and produces an impression connected with this spectacle never to be effaced from memory. That the reader may comprehend how vast and varied was the scene I surveyed, it is necessary to inform him that the Mediterranean, though fifty miles distant, seemed to lie at the feet of the huge pile from which I beheld it; and across its surface, perhaps fifty miles broad at

this point, were discernible the winding shores of that great continent which to this day is but partially known to Europeans. The waters of this inland sea were hidden beneath a cloudy veil of spray, raised, doubtless, by the action of the gale, which still lashed round the summit of the Picacho. Where they touched the "land of the Moor," as Barbary is called by the Spaniards, a narrow border of snowy purity running along the coast indicated that their meeting with the land was in no friendly mood. Had the day been clearer, I might have beheld more than the outline of these inhospitable shores, and by looking towards the south-west, might have descried the summits of the lofty chain of Atlas; but a hazy mist enveloped that quarter, and shrouded from view an object which could not be less than a hundred and fifty miles distant.

In the same direction, and although nearer, still some eighty miles distant, were the mountains of Ronda, and an assemblage of minor ranges: further to the west, the prospect was shut out by the intervening sierras of Granada and Elvira, at whose feet the vega spread its carpet of verdure. Though many a league distant, its aspect was still beautifully green, and, deep sunk among dark mountains, resembled an emerald lying in the hollow of a swarthy hand. Northward, the swelling crests of the Sierra Morena pierced the horizon; on the other side of them lay the tableland of La Mancha; and it is affirmed that on a clear day may be descried the Guadarrama hills, ten leagues to the north of Madrid. Then, on the north-east and east came into view the sierras of Murcia and Valencia; while more to the south the wild ranges of the Alpujarras, an imposing host of savage peaks, filled up the space between my tower of observation and the distant



Mediterranean. I doubt much if within the limits of Europe there can be found a prospect at once so vast and grand as that which is commanded from this summit. Land and water, mountain and plain, are here contemplated, on a scale of magnificence which almost realises the dreams of imagination : not one alone, but many provinces and kingdoms may be traced within the sweep of vision ; and when memory recalls the history and fate of each, their past glories, their terrible convulsions, their influence upon the arts and sciences, the thoughts and opinions, and the civilisation of Europe and the world, it is difficult to say whether the historic interest of the scene, or its wondrous grandeur, leaves the deepest impression on the mind.\* To the view-hunter there is no spot so likely to gratify his passion ; and as that taste is shared in no inconsiderable degree by the fair sex, to them I would say that there is nothing to prevent them from contemplating this noble panorama from the altitude to which I had climbed. The Picacho, as I have already stated, may be approached on horseback to within a quarter of a mile of its summit ; the remainder of the ascent, though steep and fatiguing to those unused to clambering, may be achieved without danger, or without any accident more serious than a trip or stumble among the slippery masses that encumber the acclivity.

Rapidly descending, we passed the station of our friend of the cueva ; who, by the way, was released only once in fourteen days from his hermit's occupation, upon which occasion he visited his family in Monachil, a village at the foot of the Veleta. This hamlet

\* According to a computation made by a recent traveller, the view from the Veleta embraces a circumference of a thousand miles.

occupied a beautiful nook, watered by a crystal stream, and surrounded with groves and vegetation; here we made our noontide repast on a bench at the door of a tavern, for *venta* there was none in the place. Our appearance speedily attracted an admiring throng of loiterers and famished urchins, who gazed upon the evolutions of a fork with a surprise that expressed their ignorance of its use as a substitute for fingers.

During the remaining portion of my stay in Granada, I wandered without settled purpose through the city and its environs, directing my steps as fancy impelled; sometimes straying up the narrow vale of the Darro, or visiting the Generalife, or bending my course through the Vega, with no fixed point in view. One of the longest of these excursions brought me to the village of Zubia, a locality seldom visited by travellers, though connected with a memorable event in the life of Isabel la Catolica. While the Christian forces beleaguered Granada, their noble queen, impelled by motives of curiosity, was desirous of approaching as near as possible to the walls of the city, in order to obtain a closer view of those spires and minarets upon which her triumphant subjects were destined to place the Cross. For this purpose she quitted the royal encampment at Santa Fe, and, protected by an escort, advanced as far as this village. The movement, however, did not escape the notice of the Moors; a strong body sallied forth and impetuously assailed the party, whose temerity seemed to invite an attack. In the skirmish that ensued, the queen found a place of retreat beneath the boughs of a spreading laurel, around which her gallant cavaliers fought stoutly until the arrival of succours from the Spanish host caused the foe to withdraw. To commemorate her safe exit from the peril of that day,



her Majesty subsequently founded a convent upon the spot. Connected with its erection are some startling particulars, which I extract from the monkish chronicle that records this deed of royal gratitude and piety:—

“The queen having ascertained from her confessor, Don Fernando de Talavera, first archbishop of Granada, that the day of the skirmish was consecrated by the Church to Saint Louis, King of France, dedicated to him the convent of the Zubia as an eternal monument of her gratitude. In the garden of the convent remained the laurel of the queen, close to which is a cross of large dimensions, placed upon a pedestal piously formed of skulls and bones of the dead. Among those spoils of our mortal frame there was a skull so restless, that however often it was ranged in order with the others, it would by no means abide in their company; it was repeatedly seen to leave its position, and this induced the friars to take more than ordinary precaution to fix it in its niche. But in spite of their purpose the skull leaped from the calvary, from which at length it remained excluded; for the friars being convinced that it was that of a Mahomedan, praised the mysterious hand that plucked it from among those which were anointed with the holy ointment in baptism.”

Without much difficulty I gained admission into the garden of the convent, for, in common with all the monastic edifices in the hands of government, this religious building was abandoned to neglect, and bore witness to the depredations of the covetous or mischievous. The garden was overgrown with weeds, and in a state of complete disorder; but in the midst of it there still flourished a clump of noble laurels, the finest I had yet seen in Andalucia, and which anywhere would have attracted observation. Here, then, was the

site of the incident to which I have alluded; and I would fain have fancied that under the shade of the largest bush the queen had sought shelter, and from thence watched with anxious eye the struggle of her devoted followers against superior numbers; but the illusion could only have been indulged at the expense of truth: though venerable enough, my branching laurel could scarcely count more than a hundred summers, and was in all probability only a scion of the historic stem, which time had long ere this laid low.

As the day of my departure from Granada approached, I visited for the last time another convent, in order to discharge with all due punctilio that important ceremony in Spanish intercourse, the *despedida*, or leave-taking. It was not without regret that I entered for this purpose the *parlatoria*, where I had spent many a pleasant hour in chatting with those of the sisterhood with whom I was acquainted. On these occasions a variety of preserves and sweetmeats would be produced by the nuns, who considered themselves sadly affronted if I did not despatch a goodly portion of their store; after this would follow a string of questions touching *Inglaterra*, that "far countree" of heretics; while I, on my part, was equally inquisitive respecting the discipline and usages of conventual life. Necessary as was the extinction of monastic institutions, in order to remove an incubus that weighed down the moral and intellectual energies of the nation, one could not listen to the tale of these poor women without learning that, in the mode of suppressing the convents, much hardship and injustice had been inflicted upon helpless sufferers. In the first instance, their property had been forcibly wrested from their possession; an act of spoliation for

which there could be no justification, inasmuch as the abolition of monachism by no means involved the confiscation of conventual revenues: these were the private property of each religious community, and in strict justice they could no more be dispossessed of them than could a landed proprietor be deprived of his estates. This injustice will be better understood by the reader when he is made aware, that it was the custom of many individuals to enter convents, not so much from motives of piety as from the wish to pass the decline of their days in ease and comfort. For this end they contributed their quota to the convent funds; and, in fact, no one could enter a religious house without purchasing admission by a sum, which varied according to the rules of the order. Thus, in the establishment with whose inmates I had become acquainted, the terms of admission ranged from £150 to £200; and without this dowry its doors were closed against all who might wish to dedicate their lives to its service. For the same reasons there were to be found many parents who selected this as the most eligible mode of securing to their daughters a provision for life. In a nunnery there was provided for them a home, where they were certain to feel none of the miseries attendant on poverty and old age; and hence the step of quitting the world for the seclusion of a religious life, so far from being taken with reluctance, as we are usually inclined to believe, was to many females an event that promised them a refuge from dependency and want. The injustice, therefore, of confiscating to the uses of the state, property devoted to such purposes, can admit of no palliation. It was further aggravated by the inadequacy of the equivalent awarded to the ejected monks and nuns. This only amounted to the trifling pittance of a peseta,



or tenpence, a day—payment of which was of course the last matter to be attended to. In Spain, the rule of state is, that the most potent claimant gets justice done to him, while the weak and helpless go to the wall: so it was with the recipients of this pension which was invariably twelvemonths in arrear, and frequently longer. The consequences may be easily conceived: such only of the “exclaustrados” as were fortunate enough to possess friends or relatives, to whom they could appeal for assistance, succeeded in averting the pressure of poverty; but misery and destitution overtook the majority, and of the nuns there were not a few who, under such circumstances, betook themselves to a course of life the most opposed to that which they professed. After some time, permission was accorded to the nuns to return to their convents, a privilege of which numbers gladly availed themselves: their former homes, however, had in the mean time been reduced to mere shells of building; every article of a portable nature was gone; and, indeed, whatever portion of the structure might be converted into money was torn down and disposed of. To such an extent was this rapacious spirit carried, that in the parlatoria where I heard these things, the reja, or iron grating that separated visitors from the sisterhood, had not been spared; its place was now supplied by a wooden substitute of so frail a description, and so little calculated to exclude the world, that I was careful not to lean against it, lest I might unceremoniously be deposited at the feet of the sisters. When I rose to bid farewell, I preferred a request which may perhaps strike the reader as somewhat singular. The truth is, that, owing to the mode by which light was admitted into the apartment, I had not once caught a glimpse of Sor Theresa’s and Sor

Paula's features, frequently as I had conversed with them; and I now begged the favour of being permitted to behold their countenances. The good sisters readily complied, and one of them getting a candle caused its light to fall upon the features of herself and her companion. Assuredly it was with no expectation of viewing charms above the common that I had solicited this favour, but I was unprepared for the ghastly spectacle the light revealed. The seclusion, and perhaps the severities of a convent life, had told upon the health of the sisters, and given to their countenances the hue of death; while the only feature that seemed alive was the eye, which seemed to shine with an unnatural lustre. It would have been no flight of imagination to have fancied them creatures not of flesh and blood, so corpse-like was their appearance—assisted, moreover, as the illusion was by their costume, which, with its hood and flowing drapery, might have passed for a shroud. Their voices, however, belied the unearthly character of their exterior, for they were low and soft, and deepened the effect of the kindly adieus that accompanied my parting.

The next thing was to find the means of conveyance to Malaga, whither I was proceeding. Tired, for the time, of mules, I bargained with a man for a tartana, or light covered cart, to convey me the whole distance. I agreed at once to his demand of eight dollars. "But then, Señor," said he, "the expenses on the road will be something, say ten dollars:" this was likewise agreed to. "Also a gratificacion for the mozo:" to this I had no objection. "Also—" but before he could finish the sentence I civilly bade him good morning, my patience being already considerably exhausted, and in no state to encounter the various "alsos" that might be forthcoming. The only alternative was, to



take a place in the galera, or waggon, which plies between the two cities, and was to start that evening. Nothing, it is true, could be more slow or wearisome than this vehicle, which consumed two days or more in performing a distance over which a modern mail-coach, on a good road, would have bounded in a few hours; but remembering Smollett's description of such a conveyance, and of its motley complement of passengers, I anticipated being repaid for physical discomforts by beholding in a Spanish galera some of the scenes that were wont to occur in an English waggon of the last century. As it slowly approached the spot where I was waiting for it on the outskirts of the town, I had full time to survey it minutely. The exterior was almost hidden by the multitude of packages which surrounded it in defiance of anything like order or arrangement. These were for the most part the property of the passengers, by whom the inside seemed to be filled: the noisy mirth I heard long before the cumbrous machine came up and displayed its mixed cargo—for there were as many females as males in the party. In front stepped six noble mules, harnessed in line, and decorated with bells; the most sagacious of the team leading the way, and pricking a safe passage among the ruts and inequalities of the road, which was in a wretched state of disrepair. About a mile from the city the conductor brought us to a halt, for the purpose of allowing the greater part of the passengers to descend: these were the friends of the intending travellers, and, in conformity with a custom of the country, had accompanied them for a short distance on their way. With our numbers diminished to six, we again started; and while the machine is rolling onwards to Santa Fe I shall describe its inmates. Each class of the com-

munity appeared to have contributed its representative: there was the Church, in the shape of a subordinate connected with the cathedral of Granada; War was represented by a grey-haired officer and a young soldier on furlough; Commerce, by a young Biscayan merchant on a trading journey to Malaga; while Don E—— stood for that numerous body who disdain a profession, and live nobody knows how. One and all were already on the best of terms with each other—for Andalusians do not take half a day to thaw into speaking terms, as is the use and wont among Britons—and were now in the highest spirits for the journey. Among the travellers, however, was one who played a different part. This was a mastiff of the breed called in Spain “perro alan.” None are more renowned for fierceness and tenacity of hold than these dogs, which, with all the courage of the bull-dog, are far superior to him in weight and strength. In the Plaza de Toros, when it happens that a bull shows himself a craven, and shrinks from the lance of the picador, a storm of popular indignation breaks forth against the animal, and amid reiterated shouts of “Perros!” he is devoted to the dogs. On these occasions I have repeatedly witnessed a mastiff of this kind, after being tossed a dozen feet into the air, return undauntedly to the charge, and, though bleeding and mangled, endeavour to pin the bull to the ground. In this, however, it was rarely successful, for it was only when half-a-dozen were let loose at once that the lord of the pastures was fairly mastered. Being desirous of possessing a specimen of this description of dog, I applied to an individual in Granada who was said to be the owner of several. The man brought me an animal that struck me as being a perfect model of canine strength—deep-chested, with

a fore-arm and neck like a lion's, while the head was small and finely proportioned. Moreover, his pedigree was of the highest class; he was, as his master phrased it, "a son of the Alcaiceria."

This is the bazaar of Granada, which at night is cleared of all its denizens, and consigned to the exclusive guardianship of a race of these dogs, whose courage is proverbial. Such a mode of protecting property, I may remark, seems to be a favourite one with Spaniards, for in like manner the mosque of Cordova was guarded by a band of mastiffs, who were turned into its sacred precincts at nightfall; and it is only of late the custom has been abandoned. Finally, this son of the Alcaiceria, besides other recommendations, had peculiar claims to more than an ordinary share of ferocity, if such a quality is to be considered hereditary. It so happened that his grandsire and grandmother, while roaming in performance of their nocturnal watch among the narrow passages of the bazaar, discovered an individual lurking in a nook, with no good intent towards the commodities within reach. The unhappy man was instantly assailed by the savage pair, and in a trice worried to death: this, however, did not satisfy the animals, whose appetites had been awakened by the taste of blood, and they completed the tragedy by devouring a considerable portion of him before their keepers came in the morning to chain them up according to custom. For all these reasons I purchased this descendant of cannibal ancestors; whom, on my joining the galera, I found towing astern of it, not figuratively, but after a fashion that threatened him with the fate of "patas arriba," and that full soon. This being the first time he had ever been attached to a vehicle, he had taken it into his head that some evil usage was thereby intended



him, and instead of following quietly, was opposing, with a ludicrous air of defiance, the progress of the machine. With his paws extended in front to the full stretch, his attitude was a picture of stubborn resistance to superior strength; and rather than move an inch willingly, he preferred being dragged like a plough through the dust of the road. I speedily released him from his martyrdom; and on reaching Santa Fe, consigned him to the care of a peasant, who for a small remuneration undertook to conduct him to the termination of the stage. At Santa Fe commenced the miseries of the night: more passengers crept in under the tilt of the waggon, and diminished the scanty space so much, that at length it was impossible either to move or turn after having once taken up a position. We lay across the vehicle, our heads resting on the wicker-work which formed its sides. The veteran travellers had furnished themselves with pillows, in order to deaden the rude shock with which at each jolt their skulls came into contact with the wooden spikes that formed the top of the wicker-work; but the novices, among whom I was one, suffered unspeakably from their inexperience. For two long hours it seemed to me the vehicle was playing at football with my head; and gladly I rose as soon as a moonbeam strayed beneath our canopy, to follow it on foot. This I did for the remainder of the stage, which terminated shortly after sunrise at a venta about a league from Loxa. While the rest of the party took up their quarters at the venta, I pushed on to this town, with which I was already familiar.

Seen from the Vega, its aspect was striking and picturesque; it occupies the mouth of a gorge, in which the Genil turns to enter a narrow valley, between high

and rugged steep. On the western side of the pass is built the principal portion of the town, the houses rising above each other in such a fashion that the foundation of one often appeared on a level with the roof of another. On the opposite side of the river a suburb leans against the precipitous slopes of the enclosing sierra, and communicates with the town by a bridge, celebrated of yore in the wars of Granada. At eight o'clock in the evening the galera came up, and I took my place in it with dismal forebodings: the hours, however, passed less drearily than I anticipated, for sleep came to my relief; and when day broke I found we were ascending a magnificent pass. On the left hand a wall of rock, many hundred feet in height, towered above our heads; while on the right a pile of stony fragments, confusedly heaped together, rose nearly to an equal height. Through a narrow passage left at the bottom of this abyss, the road wound upwards by a gentle ascent, and conducted towards a wild ridge, which rose athwart our line of direction, and appeared to bar all egress from the defile. Suddenly turning into an opening on the right, we emerged from our gloomy strait into a broken and mountainous region, through which we alternately ascended and descended for three hours; at length the galera stopped at a humble venta, and the stage was completed. The hostelry in question was the meanest of its class I had yet seen on the road. Its best apartments were two or three murky dens, into which a traveller in England would have been loth to introduce his horse. Presently it transpired that there was another and a better venta about a mile distant, with the proprietor of which our conductors had quarrelled, and in revenge had transferred their custom to this wretched dwelling. Not



being disposed to suffer martyrdom in their cause, Don E——, our Biscayan friend, and myself, started for the other establishment, which is called the Venta de Dornajos. When about a few hundred yards distant from it we perceived two men approaching, whose appearance in a lonelier spot would have caused us to prepare our fire-arms for service. These strangers, whose costume differed in nothing from that of the peasant, were, however, the friends and not the spoilers of peaceful wayfarers. Their ostensible office, that of guardas del camino, was to patrol the roads and keep them clear of brigands; but after the usual fashion in which the "cosas de España" are managed, they lounge about the ventas all day, and on the approach of a carriage stroll out to meet it, and claim a gratuity for their vigilance.

The venta we found to be far superior to the miserable hovel we had quitted; it could even boast of an upper story, in which there was tolerable accommodation for the weary; and here we passed the time until, at the usual hour in the evening, the galera drove up. The aspect of the country, ere darkness shrouded every object, was impressed with the same wild character which had marked the scenery since leaving Loxa; the same gaunt and bronzed sierras gathered round our route, and where a prospect was permitted, the same dark blue summits were seen in the distance. As the night wore on, it became evident, from the increasing dampness of the atmosphere, that we were approaching the sea-coast; a refreshing breeze at the same time banished the sultry calm we had borne with impatience, and acted like a charm upon the spirits. Some time before dawn the conductor desired us to alight and proceed onwards for some distance on foot, as the

galera was about to descend a steep declivity by a bad road, where an overturn was no unfrequent mishap. We were then crossing the amphitheatre of hills which encircle Malaga, from whose summits in daylight a noble prospect is commanded, but at that moment the obscurity scarcely permitted our eyes to distinguish the road; and when the dawn appeared we were nearly on a level with the town. In a few minutes more we had passed through the gardens that environ it; and thus terminated my first and last expedition in a galera.

## CHAPTER XVII.

MALAGA.—ITS HISTORY.—ITS CAPTURE A GOOD SPECULATION.—  
 SMUGGLING.—ALMERIA.—ITS BEAUTIFUL BAY.—MULETEER'S COT-  
 TAGE.—I SPEAK LIKE A CHRISTIAN.—ROUTE TO PURCHENA.—  
 INDUSTRIOUS CULTIVATION OF THE SOIL.—PERSECUTIONS OF THE  
 MORISCOES.—TABERNAS.—PARTICULAR INQUIRIES.—PURCHENA.—  
 BAZA.—GITANOS.—ROW IN THE VENTA.—GUADIX.—ASPECT OF  
 THE SIERRA NEVADA.—PRONUNCIAMIENTO IN GRANADA.

THE position of Malaga, though neither picturesque nor imposing, is well adapted for the purposes of commerce. It lies in the bosom of a wide and beautiful bay, whose deep waters and sheltering promontories invite the merchantman to approach its shores without fear; while on the land side it is surrounded by a fruitful vega, backed by those vine-clad hills which have associated its name with the grape in all its varieties of preparation. The best point of view is from the mole, on the extremity of which stands a handsome light-house. Looking back towards the land, the eye rests upon a rocky height upon the right of the town, whose summit and flank are covered with the extensive remains of ancient fortifications. That mass of ruined walls on the lowest slope is the Alcazaba; while the fortress crowning the height is the Gibralfaro, which derives its name from the *pharos*, or lighthouse, that once threw its light across the bay to welcome the Roman mariner; between the two a communication was maintained by means of a narrow passage defended by lofty walls, and

fortified with towers. Still turning the eye to the right, the eastern flank of the bay is seen to sweep outwards in many a rocky curve to the sea; dark sierras come down from the interior, and confront with lofty brows the tideless waters; on the verge of each tall cliff a solitary watch-tower gleams in the sunshine: once its occupants looked out for the Algerine corsair, but their watch is now for the "contrabandista," no less than the African the enemy to Spain's commerce, and the offspring of her feebleness; here and there a level spot of shore lurks under the shadow of the cliffs, and furnishes room for a few scattered cottages and their smiling gardens; and in the furthest distance the village of Cantales lies in a sunny nook between two ridges, its humble roofs screened from the easterly gales by a bold headland, which closes the view in that direction. Nor is the view towards the left inferior in beauty, though of a character less romantic. In the foreground the city and its many-coloured edifices spread irregularly along the margin of the bay; in the centre towers the cathedral, its barbarous architecture softened down by the distance, and now resolving itself into an imposing mass of building; then, on the outskirts of the town, white villas peep out pleasantly from among the orange-groves, and the rich foliage in which they are bowered; and the eye lingers upon this sight, so rarely seen in Spain except in the vicinity of populous towns. Further to the left extends along the coast the Sierra de Mijas, having at its base the village of Churriana, a favoured retreat of the Malagueños; and in the far west, seen above all the mountain throng, the dark blue sierras of Ronda gather sternly together.

Malaga lays claim to a remote origin. It was known to the Romans by the name of Malaca; and long be-

fore their conquering eagles were seen before it, the Phœnicians are said to have frequented its port. Knowing as we do how far the merchant princes of Tyre and Sidon pushed their commercial expeditions, nothing is more probable than such a supposition, more especially as the surrounding sierras abounded in those precious metals for the sake of which their voyages appear to have been principally undertaken. Under the Moorish sway it was, as now, celebrated for the excellence of its fruits; and was a city of note during the last days of the kingdom of Granada. Its capture preceded that of the capital, and was effected only after a resistance honourable to the besieged, who yielded rather to famine than the sword: they and their families were sold into slavery, and their possessions appropriated by the conquerors. In reading the narrative of its fall, as transmitted to us by Spanish historians, one learns how transparent was the disguise of religious zeal or patriotism under which the belligerent Castilians veiled their crusade against the lands and wealth of the followers of the Crescent. The truth is, that the spirit of speculation was then, as now, a characteristic of the times—with this difference, that, being influenced by the propensities of a people inured to war, it sought to attain its objects by violence and the sword rather than by the arts of peace. A company of adventurers banded themselves to capture and spoil a Moorish city, just as capitalists now unite to construct a railroad or work a mine. If it yielded to their arms, the booty, in captives, riches, houses, and precious metals, repaid them, and “they sold out to advantage.” If, on the other hand, its defenders succeeded in protracting their resistance till the approach of winter, when a siege, in the state of the military art as it then existed, could with



difficulty be carried on, the concern was generally wound up, and the speculators retired with loss. Thus, in reference to Malaga, there is extant the scheme of division, according to which the captors parted among themselves the city, in proportions corresponding to the contributions each had furnished towards the siege. At the head of the list we find the names of the Ponce de Leons, the Mendozas, Aguilers, Hurtados, Puerto-carreros, and others of like renown, for their gallantry against the infidel ; but lower down come a long string of burgesses and craftsmen, millers, tanners, armourers, and so forth, whose purses had liberally contributed to the undertaking, and to whom were now allotted their respective shares in the spoil.

Within the town are few objects of interest. Its cathedral is an unfinished structure, in the Hispanio-Italian style of architecture. The Alameda, however, is a noble promenade, diversified with fountains and trees, and bordered by a long line of stately dwellings, which throw into the shade anything of the kind to be seen in the other merchant cities of Andalucia. Outside the town, and beyond the Gibralfaro, is the site of the English cemetery, on a slope commanding a fine view of the Mediterranean. For long this was the sole public resting-place in Spain for British dead ; and the credit of having obtained this boon from the authorities is due to Mr. Mark, the father of our present consul in Malaga. Previously, it was the custom to inter our countrymen in the beach, and then only at midnight ; while the burial was accompanied by many circumstances to wound the feelings of mourners, and which it is surprising that the representatives of this nation at the Spanish court ever permitted to exist. The like fashion prevailed at Cadiz, where the only place of in-

terment allowed to Protestants was in the ditches of the fortifications.

Although the legitimate commerce of Malaga is great, it shares, like all the ports in this quarter, in the illicit traffic which has been called into existence by the absurdly prohibitory measures of the country. It is difficult to estimate the number of individuals engaged in this trade. I have heard it stated by persons on whose information I could rely, that it furnishes occupation to more than eighty thousand of the population along the coast and in the mountainous district of Ronda; but in reality the whole peasantry of Andalusia are interested in the trade, and if not professed contrabandistas, are always ready to join a "smuggling lay" when an occasion presents itself. The principal articles introduced are cotton goods and tobacco, the latter having the preference from being the more lucrative of the two. It is in vain that the most stringent measures are adopted by the government to suppress the traffic: if there were no other causes of failure, the universal corruption of its servants would suffice to neutralise the best devised scheme of prevention. For some months the system of protection had been placed on a new footing; a company had undertaken to enforce the laws, and had commenced operations by stationing steamers along the coast, in the hope of thereby baffling the smuggling boats, which are invariably the swiftest of their class. Yet their success was very partial; shortly before my arrival in Malaga, a landing of seven hundred "cargas" or mule-loads had been effected at Estepona, a town on the coast not far distant from Gibraltar: this could only have been managed through the connivance of the officials connected with the place. On a beautiful evening I found myself on board of

a French steamer bound for Almeria. This is a port situated about one hundred and twenty miles to the eastward of Malaga, and lying close to the rugged regions of the Alpuxarras, which it was my present purpose to visit. From the summit of the Veleta I had descried the assemblage of wild sierras which bear that general name, and my resolution was quickly taken to embrace the earliest opportunity of penetrating into a mountain-land rarely trodden by the traveller, though, from the grandeur of its natural features and from historical interest, well worthy of his steps. Here, after the fall of Granada, the shadow of a kingdom was given to the last of the Moorish monarchs; here the last rebellion of the hapless Moriscoes was kindled by the fires of the Inquisition; and in the bosom of these savage chains they vainly strove to arrest by arms the course which Spanish cupidity had long meditated against the last remnant of their once powerful kingdom.

The last objects upon which my eyes rested ere we went below were the mountains to the westward of Malaga, crowned with the fading lustre of day; and when next morning I reached the deck, it was to behold on the left a chain of mountains rising gradually from the sea, and half veiled in purple shadows. The range followed the outline of the coast, close to which we were steering, and then bending its march inland, gave place to the wide healthy level called the Llanos de Almeria. Presently a beautiful bay opened into view, disclosing in its farthest recess a picturesquely situated town and castle. Towards these the steamer shaped its course, passing on the left a succession of craggy buttresses that boldly spring from the rocky wall on this side into deep water; and before noon the anchor was dropped in front of Almeria.

At the *table d'hôte* of the inn I took my place, as the last comer, at the foot of a long table, around which was assembled as motley a collection of guests as I had ever witnessed; yet though the variety was great, there were certain characteristics common to the whole party. All of them talked loud and long, all ate voraciously, and reversing the usual order of things, all appeared to have ~~undressed~~ dressed for dinner. Our transatlantic brethren are not singular in some things: many of these men sat at table with their shirt-sleeves rolled up to the shoulders; and without an exception all had their collars thrown far back, thereby displaying their hirsute throats and brawny bosoms. A stranger, however, just landed, would err greatly in concluding that such exhibitions as the above are frequent in Spain; in fact, these men belonged to the fraternity of commercial travellers and *commis voyageurs*, and only displayed the manners of their class, which neither in Spain nor elsewhere is distinguished for polish or refinement. The cause of their congregating in such numbers at this port arose from the circumstance of a sierra in the neighbourhood being lately found to possess numerous veins of lead ore, which promised to yield rich profits to the explorers. The discovery had awakened the highest excitement in a country where the inclination to gather wealth by any other means than the course of patient industry is a national characteristic; and the usual consequences ensued. A multitude of adventurers and capitalists flocked in from all quarters, and, although utterly devoid of experience or science, were now engaged in piercing the mountain with prodigious ardour.

So many as a hundred pits were said to be sunk upon one side alone of the mountain, each excavation being the property of a different owner. What their success



was, I found it difficult to learn ; but it appeared to me, from the amount of litigation connected with their proceedings, that they were better skilled in undoing the work of their neighbours, than in extracting riches for themselves from the hoards of mother earth. I gladly made my escape from the noisy throng, and, accompanied by a guide, proceeded to view the castle. We ascended by a steep and winding path, the upper part laboriously hewn out of the solid rock ; and reached, after passing through one or two gates, a wide open space which in days of yore had been the plaza de armas of the fortress. Still ascending, we gained the summit of the citadel, crowned by modern fortifications, which, from the date carefully emblazoned on the walls, had been constructed in the reign of Carlos Tercero. Few have heard of the Bay of Almeria, for it lies out of the track of tourists ; but in scenery it may challenge comparison with the most admired in the Mediterranean. The shores are everywhere high and striking, and fling their rocky masses into a noble crescent, within which all the navies of the world might find shelter. Perhaps a want of softness may be objected, as the eye ranges from point to point of its bold outlines, and sees cliff succeeding cliff with but little variety ; but at the time I viewed it, the scenery had relieved the sternness of its primitive character with the hues of sunset, and was wrapped in the tranquillity of evening. The waters of the bay at the same time partook of the surrounding repose ; and on their smooth surface the one or two white sails visible floated without appearing to move. On the eastern extremity of its shores there stretched out to sea a long line of black precipices, upon which the last of the sun's rays was shed with a brilliancy that enhanced by contrast the general



effect of the scene. Within the bay, however, they had ceased to penetrate, for sierras swelled upwards on its western flank, and now cast their shadows across the deep blue of its waters. Then came twilight; and that, too, in a short half hour darkened into gloom, over this beautiful daughter of the Mediterranean. What shall I say of thee, creation of summer skies, blue waters, and stately proportions? "O matre pulchrâ filia pulchrior," mayest thou never awaken to the roar of the tempest, nor reflect aught but the smile of heaven!

I had been fortunate in my experience of the Mediterranean: although associated in our thoughts with a peaceful temper, "its blood is sometimes up," and then, like all quiet people when fairly roused, its wrath is far worse than that of an habitual blusterer. Moreover, in so narrow a sea the navigator has a wild shore always within uncomfortable proximity; added to which, it is singularly deficient in harbours and ports of refuge.

"Where are the best ports in the Mediterranean?" inquired the Emperor Charles V. of an ancient mariner.

"Junio, Julio, Agosto, y Puerto de Cartagena," replied the veteran; meaning that Cartagena was the only safe harbour at all seasons, and that the others were not to be trusted except during the three months of summer.

The town lies at the foot of the eminence on which its castle is situated; and, following the rule observable in most places of Moorish origin, its dwellings keep under the shadow of its fortifications, and scrupulously avoid straggling far from their protection. Here they encircled the base of the rocks in a narrow band for at least two-thirds of their circumference. Looking from above, their flat roofs presented a singular appearance;

and being all nearly on a level, one might have passed from one end of a street to another by means of the passage they afforded. On the eastern side stretches its vega to the foot of a sierra which terminates in the Capo de Gata; in the midst wound the river of Almeria, its further bank clothed with the usual exquisite verdure of a vega; while on the nearer side groves of fig and olive-trees extended up to the skirts of the town.

As I wandered through the town I might have moralised much upon the weakness of human nature, and taken my guide for the text. This worthy was by no means unwilling to stoop to the office for the considerations it involved, but at the same time wished to keep up his dignity among the citizens of Almeria. Evidently his desire was, to impress them with the notion that he was the greater man of the two, and was only conducting me to the sights as an act of gracious condescension on his part. For this purpose he stationed himself at my right hand, presuming on my supposed ignorance of the law of Spanish etiquette, which enjoins that this is the post of those whom we consider ourselves bound to honour. Among equals in rank there is frequently a friendly struggle to yield this distinction to each other; and to a stranger it is always conceded. Of course, a hireling has just as much title to it as he has to lean on one's arm, or sit at the same table. Once or twice I dodged him and took my right place, in order to enjoy his crest-fallen looks and the air of trepidation he displayed when there was a chance of our meeting some of his acquaintances; but after all I found I had the worst of the diversion, for on these occasions he waxed sulky and uncommunicative, and was no better than a walking sign-post.

Next morning, with a roguish young muleteer for my

companion, I was bending my course towards the dark sierras that thickly cover this district, and increase in height as they recede from the coast. My route was inland, and would take me by the cities of Purchena, Baza, and Guadix, and conduct me once more to Granada. We left the town by a good road, amid gardens and groves; but this sank into the usual mule-track long before we had reached a hamlet about a league distant, where my muleteer had his abode; and stopping before a door, he requested me to alight and enter his home, pleading as an excuse for the detention some important piece of business. The truth, however, was, that having got hold of an Ingles, he was desirous of showing the animal to his family and friends; and when I entered, I found myself in the centre of an admiring throng of observers. I believe they had imagined me to belong to the mute creation, for on addressing them in their own tongue there was a general exclamation of surprise. "Ave Maria! he can speak like ourselves!" was the remark that ran round the circle; and some went even the length of declaring that I could "speak like a Christian." The flattering compliment I duly acknowledged; for a compliment it was, and meant that I could speak like a Spaniard. According to the notions of the country, none but Spaniards are Christians, so that the terms are used synonymously, and the Spanish is frequently styled the Christian language. Luckily, my powers of speech were not much drawn upon, and I had, accordingly, sufficient opportunity for making my own observations. I could easily have fancied myself in the interior of an Arab tent, so much was there bespeaking a wandering life in all that I saw. The roof was dome-shaped; the light had no other entrance than by the door; and all the furniture



in the place might have been borne by a camel; such as it was, it consisted only of articles of a very portable nature, and half an hour would have sufficed to have packed it all up, after the word to march had been given. With the exception of a single low table, and a couple of still lower chairs, I saw nothing but a few mats, rolled up during day, and at night spread out to form beds, and some cooking utensils. The mistress of the house was as dark as a mulatto, and had a scarlet handkerchief bound round her head, turban fashion; her sole ornaments were a pair of large gold ear-rings depending from the ears. On the floor a couple of tawny bantlings rolled about, in happy unconsciousness of the restraints of dress; indeed, the costume of the male seniors indicated a desire to doff as much of man's apparel as might be safely dispensed with. The whole party wore very wide and loose trowsers, terminating about a hand's-breadth above the knees, which were bare, so that, at a little distance, this part of their attire might easily be mistaken for a kilt. Then came the usual botines, or leggings, and shoes of untanned leather; jackets appeared to be altogether banished, and in their stead the vests received that amount of fanciful decoration, lavished by Andalusians on the former article of dress. This, with some little variation, is the costume of the dwellers in the Alpuxarras, as well as of the natives of the province of Valencia: the latter, however, frequently discard the sombrero calanes, for which is substituted a handkerchief, tied in a peculiar fashion on the head.

Once more upon the road, if such it might be called, for the path led up the channel of a mountain torrent, amid rocks and shingle, which the stream had deserted since the spring, and would only sweep over when the

winter's rains again called it into existence. On either side, the banks rose high and precipitous, but it was a pleasing feature to behold how the hand of industry had laboured to make them fruitful. The ground, whenever it could be rescued from the bed of the torrent, was carefully surrounded with embankments and brought into cultivation; and higher up, on the steep slopes, the soil had been collected into terraces, upon which vines and other fruits flourished luxuriantly. All this was a novel sight to me, accustomed as I had been to witness in the more fertile districts of Andalusia the richest portion of the soil alone devoted to culture, while the remainder was abandoned to the goatherd and his flock. Here, on the other hand, the industrious spirit of the Moor still lingered, clothing the mountain-sides with fruitfulness, and wresting her good things from the unwilling hand of nature. The spectacle vividly impressed one with the folly and wickedness of the policy which, for the worst of motives, could banish from this region a race which had left behind them these marked traces of a laborious and persevering nature. It was in truth a worse motive than religious zeal that prompted the fiat which condemned them to expulsion; and though Cervantes labours hard to persuade his readers that the step was a master-stroke of wisdom, and was the only one to be adopted towards the irreconcilable enemies of his country and faith, the grossness of the pretext was as apparent in his day to the unprejudiced, as it is in ours. We have the real truth from the pen of Don Diego de Mendoza, one of those warrior statesmen who illustrated the reign of Charles V., and were moreover as distinguished in the world of letters as they were for deeds of arms, and sage counsel. In his classic work in



Spanish literature—the “History of the War of Granada” during the year 1598, or to speak more accurately, the rebellion of the Moriscoes during that year—the truth is revealed in these words, “Our covetousness was the chief cause of the rebellion.” The insurrection, it is true, was suppressed, and heavier burdens imposed on the mountaineers; but nothing less than their extirpation could appease the demon of avarice; their industry, activity, and thriving condition were a perpetual eyesore, which was borne with impatience for some years longer, till at last the sight could be endured no more, and in 1600 the mandate was issued for their expatriation from a region which they and their forefathers had redeemed from poverty. In that year Spain lost a million of industrious subjects, torn from this district and from Valencia, and added one more to the various seeds of decay implanted in her overgrown power. So iniquitous a transaction could not be perpetrated without its attendant measures of perfidy and cruelty: in the latter quality, Cardinal Lerma displayed an unenviable ingenuity; but the system of studied oppression, though carried to its height in his hands, was by no means a novelty to the Moriscoes. From Mendoza we learn how a people may be goaded into rebellion; the catalogue of their persecutions is a curious one, and includes almost every vexation that can rouse human nature to exasperation.

“The Inquisition,” he writes, “began to harass them more than usual. The king forbade them the use of the Moorish language, and along with it all commerce and communication with each other; their black slaves were taken away; the Moorish dress, upon which they had expended much wealth, was prohibited; they were compelled to assume the Castilian attire, at

much cost to themselves; their women were commanded to appear unveiled, and their dwellings, which they were wont to surround with privacy, to be thrown open to the public eye; both these commands being hard to be endured by a jealous people. There was a rumour, also, that their children were to be seized and transported to Castile. They were prohibited the use of baths, so necessary for their cleanliness and refreshment. Previously, they had been debarred the enjoyment of music, songs, festivals, and weddings according to their customs, and every meeting for diversion." Such was the mode employed to reconcile the Moriscoes to the Spanish yoke and the Catholic faith.

At five o'clock we reached the small village of Tabernas, where I took up my quarters for the night. Having suffered much during the day from the heat, which, in the narrow ravine up which our road lay, was peculiarly oppressive, I was glad to find in the inn an apartment where I could enjoy in solitude the rest I desired. Its sole furniture consisted of a table and chair, both of them so dwarfish as to resemble toys for children, rather than articles for the accommodation of grown-up persons. The table, which for curiosity's sake I measured, was fifteen inches high by two feet long; its companion chair was proportionably diminutive, and only raised the occupant six inches from the ground. In this trifling matter the reader will observe a trace of the Moorish habit of sitting on the floor, from which these pigmy chairs are only the first remove. Although left to solitude, my chamber was far from being the abode of silence, for a solitary plank alone divided me from the noisy party of muleteers who occupied the kitchen below, and whose conversation ascended without a word being lost to the ear. As a

matter of course, I found myself made the subject of talk, and gathered a good deal of information, not only respecting myself, but the manners and customs of the English, that was perfectly new; neither did it take me by surprise to hear a voice inquiring, with unnecessary particularity, what was the road I proposed taking on the morrow—if I carried arms—and of what description they were. At an earlier period of my travels, before I learnt to estimate at their proper value those tales of danger and recent robbery which my good-natured friends used invariably to connect with the very route I intended to take, I should have listened with some suspicion to such queries, and on the following morning should have narrowly scrutinised every bush and rock that might have screened the person of a “ratero.” But I had long since ceased to pay the slightest regard to the dismal narratives of kind friends, or to espy danger in the idle curiosity of village gossips; and, as my experience in Andalucian travelling increased, I settled down into the conviction that with proper precautions a wayfarer might roam the province from end to end without meeting a single cause for alarm. I do not, however, mean to affirm that its wild tracks are as fearlessly to be traversed as the beaten highways of England. Many causes conspire to forbid this; but the most prominent are the lawless pursuits of the population, and the nature of the country. Andalucia swarms with contrabandistas, few of whom could resist a tempting opportunity to commit robbery; and whose only resource, when overtaken by a run of ill-luck in their own calling, is to lie in wait by the roadside and cry “Boca abajo” to the next traveller. It is from this class that brigandism has drawn its supplies on every occasion that a band



has infested the country. From their habits of activity, their intimate acquaintance with highways and bye-paths, and the spirit of freemasonry that exists among the fraternity, they were the most desirable recruits to a bandit chief; and, without their aid, it is doubtful if such leaders could have held their ground so long as they did against the power of the government. Moreover, the physical character of the country peculiarly favours the highway robber. Besides being naturally wild and broken, it presents no obstacles to his escape in the shape of enclosures or fences. The blow struck, he may hold his flight across the country straight as the crow flies, without encountering any impediments except such as arise from the inequalities of the surface. This is the sort of ground he has always chosen for his exploits. It was on the heaths and extensive commons that the English highwaymen of the last century took their stand; and their disappearance is to be ascribed far less to an improved tone of morals, than to the fact of uncultivated wastes being now almost unknown, and every road bordered with its substantial fence. What between stiff hedges, stone walls, and turnpike-gates, a highwayman has now no chance of escape, and could scarcely spur his steed a mile without breaking his neck, or being descried by a score of witnesses. For the reasons, then, that I have stated, a degree of insecurity to be found nowhere else hangs over Andalusian roads, and will continue to do so as long as the present state of things exists in the province. Every now and then a band springs up in some district, holds the neighbourhood in terror for a shorter or longer period, and then the depredators vanish as suddenly as they appeared. Amid all these perils, however, a prudent traveller may steer his way without much chance

of a mishap. Let him eschew all the signs of riches, assume the costume of the country, be tolerably conversant with its language, shoulder a gun to scare away rateros, and his purse need apprehend little on the score of assaults from salteadores.

The next day's journey is best described by saying, that we were involved for many a burning hour among the wildest scenery that sierras can display. A lonely path was ours during that period; sometimes diving into a ravine where the prospect above and around disclosed only brown crags and toppling rocks; then struggling up some precipitous steep over a surface of slippery rock—our animals planting their steps in the holes worn by the constant passage of their kind along the track; and now skirting the edge of a precipice, and looking over its verge into the abyss below. At such times, although a stumble of our quadrupeds might have ended in fatal consequences to the riders, one had learnt, from familiarity with the danger, to regard it with indifference. More than once, as my feet overhung a precipice, I caught myself speculating on the precise spot, some two or three hundred feet below, my shoe would touch, should it fall off. By such a route we crossed the Sierra de Filabres, and after some ten or twelve hours' toilsome march reached the town of Purchena. The single street of which it consisted hung upon the northern flank of a mountain, at a spot where there existed the scantiest room for dwellings; yet within these straitened limits a king had once held the mockery of a residence and court. Here it was that Boabdil, the last of the Moorish monarchs, exercised the shadow of an authority permitted him by his conquerors, and ruled for a time over a few villages and valleys—the worthless remains of a kingdom that was once his. But



soon feeling ill at ease in his degraded position, he exchanged his dignities and powers for a large sum of gold, and departed for Africa, where he fell on a field of battle, bravely combating in the cause of his relative, Muley Ahmed ben Merini. "Strange," adds the Moorish chronicler, "that he who had not the courage to die in defence of his own kingdom and country, should sacrifice his life for the success of another!"

Next day was like the preceding, spent among the defiles and steepes of a sierra. Long shall I remember the Sierra de Baza, for besides being as rugged as mortal foot ever trod, the heat within its gorges and labyrinths was more oppressive than I had ever felt it in Andalucia. From the lateral ravines that opened into the valley by which we descended to the city of Baza, there poured blasts hot as those of the desert to heighten the temperature; and so intolerable was the scorching current, that on approaching the mouth of one, the whole party instinctively drew their sombreros over their faces, and bent over the opposite side of their mules, until the spot had been passed. At length the city appeared, coming into view rather unexpectedly, for it occupied a hollow in the midst of its fertile hoyas, or basins; and the tops of its houses were only visible on gaining the brow of the surrounding height. In the posada, the sole occupants of the upper chambers I found on my arrival to be a party of Gitanos. Frequently as I had encountered the sons of Egypt on the highway, in the suburb of Triana, at Seville, and at the doors of their caverns above the Albaycin at Granada, this was the first time I had met them under the same roof. My fellow-guests were, however, the aristocracy of their tribe. The principal, or at least the wealthiest of the wanderers, was a widow, whose sex did not prevent her from engaging

in the calling so dear to Gitano natures, viz., trafficking in horseflesh. In a day or two a great horse-fair was to be held in the town, and to attend this she had come, bringing with her half a dozen gaunt steeds, which occupied the stables below. By successful dealings she was now well to do in the world, and could boast of her thousands of dollars; in addition to which she possessed the sole ownership of a lead-mine in the vicinity of Almeria. All these riches were to be inherited by an only daughter; whose hand, after being eagerly sought for by various members of the race, was at last engaged to a youth who accompanied the twain. The damsel had made her selection with judgment, for her novio was a handsome specimen of Gitano blood—tall and slender in figure, and with an oval countenance, the clear olive complexion of which contrasted to his advantage with the usually swarthy hue of his tribe.

The times are passed when the Gitanos roamed the country in large bands, plying by wholesale their unlawful crafts in the pueblos they traversed, and, wherever they moved, a terror to the lonely traveller. An old Spanish author, while thus journeying alone through the mountains of Ronda, graphically describes his meeting with a horde on the march, the mortal fear the encounter caused him, and the stratagem by which he extricated himself from the thievish crew, by whose hands it was no unusual thing for the solitary wayfarer to be despoiled of his life as well as purse. "While ruminating upon the wonders of nature, I fell in so unexpectedly with a troop of Gitanos, at a stream called the Doucellas, that I would have turned back had they not seen me, for immediately I called to mind the murders that then were occurring on the road, committed by Gitanos and Moriscoes. As it was an unfrequented one,

and I happened to be alone, and with no prospect of finding people passing by to bear me company, with the best spirits I could, while they began to solicit charity, I said to them, 'God save you, good people!'

"They were drinking water, but I invited them to try wine, and handed a flask of Pedro Ximenes of Malaga, and the bread I carried with me; for all that, they ceased not to beg and demand more and more. It is my custom—and he who travels alone should adopt it—to convert into small change the silver or gold that one requires for the journey from one town to another, because it is most dangerous to display gold and silver at the ventas or by the way; and my purse being therefore filled with small coins, I drew out a handful, from which I distributed charity (never in all my days had I done it with a better will than now) among the party. The women travelled in pairs, seated on very lean yeguas and nags; the children by threes and fours, on lame and footsore donkeys. The rogues of Gitanos marched on foot, nimble as the wind; and at that time they seemed to me both tall and athletic, for fear magnifies objects very much. The track was both narrow and dangerous, encumbered by many large roots of trees, and my beast stumbled as much as he could. From time to time the Gitanos gave it slaps on the haunches; while it appeared to me that they were about to do the same thing to my soul, for I journeyed on the lowest and narrowest part of the road, and the others along the sides above me, by paths winding among a thousand dwarf oaks and lentisks. In the midst of this perturbation and fear, as I proceeded, directing cautious glances at the sides, moving my eyes but not the head, a Gitano suddenly planted himself before me, and seized the bridle and bit of my animal.



While I was about to cast myself upon the ground, he exclaimed, 'I see your macho has lost the marks of age on its teeth.'

"Said I to myself, 'May you find the gate of heaven closed to you, O thief! for the fear you have caused me.'

"They inquired if I would exchange it; but as I considered that their object was to rob me, and that I could not get rid of them except by holding out the prospect of greater plunder, with the best face I could I drew forth some more change, and distributing it, said, 'I would do so with pleasure, but I have left behind me a friend of mine, a merchant, who is alone, and whose macho has fallen lame. I am now pushing on to the next pueblo, to fetch another animal to transport the load of money it bears.'

"On hearing the words 'solitary merchant,' 'lame macho,' and 'load of money,' they cried, 'God speed your worship! in Ronda we shall employ the alms you have bestowed on us.'

"I spurred my macho, and caused him to pace along these rugged tracks rather faster than he liked; they remained behind, speaking in their jargon, and waiting for the supposed merchant. Afterwards I saw one of the men condemned in Seville for robbery, and a female receive the punishment of a sorceress in Madrid. Of the children, some were naked, others clothed in a slashed jerkin or torn jacket; among the Gitanos one was attired in a superior manner, her costume adorned with plates of silver, and wearing bracelets of the same; the rest were only partially clad."

In the present day the Gitanos rove only in families or small parties; and if they rob, it is rather by fraud and deception than by the knife to the throat of the

wayfarer. Still, as of yore, their daily occupations are connected with the horse; to buy and sell, to steal, exchange, and metamorphose that noble animal, are the employments of the greater number; to which they add the vocation of clipping the hair of mules and burros—for in Spain it is the fashion to shear the backs of beasts of burden. In all the tricks and mysteries of the profession none such proficient as they: in transforming an unsound into a sound animal—in painting and otherwise disguising a stolen one, so that the owner himself would fail to recognise it—and in stupifying a vicious one, so as to give it the appearance of the best temper in the world, the Gitano is *longo intervallo* superior to all the other brethren of the craft; nay, more, he will convert the dullest piece of horseflesh into an animated and lively steed, while he seems only to be patting and fondling it. The trick is, I think, unknown in this country, and is effected by means of the ring he wears; from this projects an almost imperceptible iron spike, which acts like the rowel of a spur on the animal, causing it to prance and caracole, while the wearer seems only to be carelessly touching it with his open hand.

The road next day was less lonely than the paths we had hitherto painfully pursued by cliff and ravine; we were from time to time meeting parties of itinerant merchants hastening to find a market for their wares at the fair to which I have referred. Now a mule would pass us laden with bales of cloth, or a donkey staggering under a burden of alcarrazas, or porous earthen jars used for cooling water. Some of the travellers seemed to transport their household gear along with the stock in trade, for occasionally a beast would accompany the train groaning under a pile of mattresses, pillows, and



chairs, while frying-pans and brazen lamps suspended from the neck kept up a jingling accompaniment to its movements. Among the pedestrians came a gang of Catalan harvest-reapers, returning from their labours on the fertile plains of the province. I watched with admiration the free step of these sons of toil, as they rapidly approached. On they came at a long swinging pace that made their progress an astonishingly fast one; and this was the more difficult as the ground was rugged and uneven, and peculiarly adverse to fleetness of foot; but, despising every inequality, their spare and sinewy forms bounded lightly over the surface, and holding a straight course over hill and dale, were speedily lost to sight. Their province is, however, noted for the pedestrian powers of its population, and their capacity to endure extraordinary fatigue.

At midday I halted at a *venta*, the name of which I have forgotten, being in hopes to obtain some breakfast—a refreshment which constant travel since daybreak had rendered very desirable. Before the door was congregated a troop of mules, burros, and machos; and as we approached it the sounds of music and mirth, proceeding from within, betokened that their owners were yielding themselves some relaxation previous to braving the long stage that awaited them on their way to Baza. On entering, I found the place filled with a throng of country people, principally young folks, and all, both men and women, arrayed in holiday attire. On the earthen floor, three or four soldiers, and as many dark-eyed partners, were dancing the fandango, and rattling their castanets to the strains of a guitar, which the performer accompanied with his voice. Making my way through the crowd, I passed into an inner chamber: here sat the seniors of the assemblage, on benches ranged

round the wall. As it was a festive occasion, the wine-cup did not pass untasted, and the consequences were observable in a manifest increase of Andalusian loquacity and gesticulation. I blessed the good fortune which had thrown a fair in my way, for, in anticipation of the concourse to be assembled here, the ventero had laid in a store of viands; and, for once, I could procure something better than the everlasting bacalao. Bread, eggs, grapes, and wine, were placed on a table about the size of a chessboard, and of the height of an ordinary chair; seated before this, upon a stool proportionably low, I proceeded to make my repast in the corner allotted to me.

The mozo of the venta was a tall youth, whose office, as cup-bearer to the gathering, had brought his lips into frequent contact with the generous fluid he dispensed: the consequences were apparent in his rolling eye, flushed cheeks, and the air of consummate self-importance with which he discharged his duties. One of the guests called him to fulfil some order, to which he paid no attention; the summons was repeated in an angrier tone, for the speaker was himself excited by the libations he had swallowed, and accompanied his order with a threat.

"Who dares to threaten *me*?" cried our mozo, as he stood rather picturesquely in the middle of the floor, his arms raised above his head to their full stretch, in support of a jar that might contain about a gallon of wine, and had the top of his heated cranium for an unsteady pedestal.

"Yo;" thundered the other in reply.

The word was hardly uttered ere the jar was launched at the head of the speaker, who, fortunately for its safety, ducked, and escaped the missile, which smote

the wall behind him with a great crash, and poured a deluge of blood-red liquid over his neck, shoulders, and white vestments. In a trice he sprang up, a gory figure instead of a clean and trim little man; and rushing upon the mozo with a howl of rage, the twain grappled together in the true worrying style. The rest of the company as quickly jumped to their feet, and throwing themselves upon the pair, endeavoured to part them; but in trying to effect this, they only impeded each other's efforts, and for the next two minutes a mass of ten or twelve human beings might be seen tugging, hauling, and straining at each other's throats, apparently for no conceivable object, and all the while reeling about the room. To complete the effect of the scene, the terrified hostess revolved round the struggling group with a sort of dancing step, uttering doleful "Ayes de mi!" and putting up many a prayer to the Virgin. All this was highly diverting to me, until the mass surged into my corner, and, upsetting the table, scattered my breakfast on the floor: then, indeed, the whole affair assumed quite a different aspect, and I thought it shameful that people could not meet in a venta without engaging in unseemly brawls, and, what was worse, depriving me of my repast. At last the fray was brought to a close: the originators of it, being drawn asunder by two or three peacemakers, were held apart at a few paces from each other, and stood breathing hard from their exertions, and with countenances less wrathful than before.

"Are you friends?" was the inquiry made them by some of the bystanders, in the way in which that question is put to children who have squabbled and fought with each other—"Are you friends now?"

The pair intimated their assent; and then being re-



leased, rushed once more into each other's arms, not to renew the combat, but to embrace as brothers.

"Moriré por él!" (I will die for him) shouted the little man, as he caught up his tall antagonist, and swung him round and round in a fit of ardent affection; then the company resumed their seats, and peace was re-established.

As we wended our way from the venta, I questioned my muleteer as to what he would have done had the brawlers used their navajas, and the life of one been taken.

"I would have made off as quickly as possible," said he; "and the same would all the others have done."

"And would you have left the man weltering in his blood?"

"Without doubt," he replied.

There was reason in this. According to the old law of Spain, he who was found in the vicinity of a murdered man was liable to be considered as the guilty person, and had to prove his innocence ere he recovered his liberty. From this it followed, that as soon as a man fell wounded in some broil, everybody fled from the spot—the innocent bystanders as well as the murderer—lest the justicia should bear them to prison: even those who might have wished to act the part of good Samaritans, were deterred by like apprehensions from drawing nigh, so that the stricken wretch not unfrequently perished from want of timely assistance. I am not aware if this law has been altered, but the feeling it engendered yet exists, and people are rather shy of meddling with the bleeding work of assassins or brawlers.

The road from Baza to Guadix is marked in the map as a royal highway, and practicable for carriages; and

truly we did meet one solitary vehicle, a tartana, or light covered cart, the sight of which being a rarity in these regions, so startled my mule that she sprang down a steep slope, and the rider being carelessly seated sideways, sent him rolling down the declivity. Nevertheless, I would counsel no four-wheeled vehicle to try this route, which only differs from a mule-track in being a little wider, and in displaying a little less of the staircase fashion by which these paths ascend and descend the mountain acclivities. The scenery at the same time began to smooth its rugged front, and the grim sierras, which we had unceasingly encountered during the preceding days, now ceased to cross our way; the slopes became longer, and were sprinkled with olive woods; and for the last hour of our journey we moved along a valley, glimpses of an open country extending before us.

At length Guadix came into view, being, like Baza, invisible until close at hand, and for the same reason: its site lay in a hollow sunk beneath the level of the surrounding expanse, and the first objects that one beheld were its grey roofs covering an irregular space in the midst of fruit-trees and foliage. Both this town and Baza were places of note during the last days of the Moorish kingdom, and enthusiastically supported the cause of Abdalah el Zagal against his nephew, Boabdil the Unlucky. The fiery spirit of the Zagal appears to have been more congenial to their population than the weak and vacillating temper of Boabdil, for both places resisted their fate with a valour worthy of their conquering founders. Baza capitulated after a six months' siege; and although Guadix was not exposed to similar trial, being surrendered without a struggle by the Zagal, its warlike renown secured it favourable terms, and it



had the honour of being the last but one of the Moslem cities to strike the Crescent to the Cross : the last was the capital itself.

Once more in Granada, after a twelve hours' march under a fiery sun. How enchanting was the brilliant green of its vega, to eyes which for hours had contended with the dazzling light, and shrunk from the hot glare reflected by naked and tawny rocks and withered steeps! All day long our route was by the base of a sierra, which, rising less abruptly than the others in this region, presented none of the bold features by which they are converted from desolate elevations into striking mountain masses : its aspect was therefore uninteresting and drear, and as we slowly advanced, the effect of its presence was as if we were linked to a cheerless but inseparable companion. Again, to the south swelled upwards the Sierra Nevada, vast, soaring, and dark : from this, the northern side, its aspect is far more imposing than from the other ; the precipices are loftier, the slopes more abrupt, and the towering Veleta itself shoots upwards with a bolder front. No mountain that I have yet seen rests so completely as does this upon mere vastness and altitude for the impression it creates. It disdains the effects derived from the usual embellishments of mountain scenery : vainly does the eye search for the pine-clad steeps, the shady glens, the torrents and foaming cascades, the purple heaths, and the ruined castles that diversify the stony exterior of other alpine heights ; neither were glaciers to be seen, nor snowy peaks with their cold brightness and reflected gleams ; but the blackness of night clothed the mountain from the base to the summit, and it rose grandly in a succession of stupendous walls, till a solitary pinnacle alone pierced the deep blue of heaven. The effect of

a lofty elevation thus dressed as it were in a sable pall from head to foot was indescribably striking, and as a picture of mournful sublimity it would be difficult to find its parallel.

To the southward and eastward of the Veleta lay the district of the Alpuxarras, as it is defined by Spanish geographers; and within its limits are comprehended the highest ranges of the Sierra Nevada. Desirous as I was of penetrating into this rugged region, I found it closed to me by the intense heat which reigned in its narrow valleys. I was compelled, therefore, to depart from my original intention, and to limit my wanderings to the lower elevations that surround its confines. Even then the hardships one suffered sometimes overpowered every other consideration, and the scenery was occasionally forgotten while passing through the fiery furnace of some ravine, or scaling a rocky steep in the full blaze of the sun.

Granada I had left as stirless and lethargic as a venerable capital ought to be; but on my return there was so unusual an excitement and bustle observable, that it seemed as if the genius of the Albaycin, that focus of revolt during the Moorish domination, had suddenly awakened from his sleep of centuries, and breathed his spirit into the gesticulating groups that occupied the plazas and corners of the streets. For, perhaps, the twentieth time in its short constitutional existence, it had "pronounced" in favour of some question of national policy, and against the administration, so that its present attitude was that of declared hostility to the ruling powers. Accordingly its worthy citizens had voted themselves into a state of war; and great were their preparations in consequence. There was much beating of drums in various quarters of the city,

and columns of "nacionales" were tramping through the streets every half hour; the shops were shut at an earlier hour than usual, the city gates doubly guarded, and all who entered rigorously examined. All this had been effected without bloodshed—if we except one citizen soldier, accidentally slain by a brother "nacional;" and, in truth, it is rare to hear of a "pronunciamiento" being accompanied with the realities of a conflict. If the movement corresponds with the general tone of feeling in the country, similar demonstrations are sure to take place in the other large towns, and then the fate of the administration may be considered as decided; but if it is only an isolated expression of sentiment, which fails to elicit support from its neighbours, the "pronouncers," who are generally peace-loving shopkeepers, on seeing this, drop the musket and their politics, return to the counter, and submit to anything rather than fight for their opinions. A few years ago the city of Seville pronounced and declared, by the voices of some thousands of her national guards, that she wished a change of ministry. In a few days she perceived that she stood alone; and her citizens did not well know what to do, until the Governor of Cadiz settled the matter. He despatched four hundred of the regular troops, whose appearance worked like a charm upon the thousands of brave "nationals." Not a shot was fired in anger; and when this handful of men entered the city, the "pronouncers" were nowhere to be seen, having acted upon the principle, that "He who runs away, may live to 'pronounce' another day."

## CHAPTER XVIII.

ROUTE TO RONDA.—ARCHIDONA.—THE CLOTH-MERCHANT.—ANTEQUERA.—THE KIDNAPPERS DISCOVERED.—THE MOORISH LOVERS.—SALT LAKE.—CAMPILLOS.—THE DEATH OF THE DOUGLAS.—THE SHRINE.—ASPECT OF RONDA.—THE CHASM.—THE MINA.—CHARACTER OF THE SERRANOS.—THE DISMANTLED VENTA.

NEXT day I was traversing the vega, Gibraltar being my bourne. My muleteer was a Granadino who had accompanied me on ascending the Veleta, and on that occasion, as well as some others, proved himself worthy of confidence. I shall pass over the vega in silence, being now thrice-trodden ground, and begin my comments at a point a short way to the westward of Loxa. Between that town and Archidona extends an undulating country abandoned to cheerless wastes, which sometimes give place to groves of the sombre olive. As we neared the latter town, Juan pointed out a rugged track ascending the mountain by which it is overshadowed. This he said was once a road, and was constructed in one night by the forces of Ferdinand and Isabella, in order to facilitate the transport of the artillery employed in battering the castle, which crowns an isolated peak rising from the skirts of the mountain. The town is situated on a slope, and boasts of something more than a principal street, for on traversing this, between convents on either side, we passed under an arch, and entered a tolerably handsome plaza, of an octagon shape. Here was

situated the *posada*, which was rather superior to the generality of Andalusian inns.

In the course of the evening, as I was sitting in my apartment, there entered a stranger, whom I recognised as an itinerant cloth-merchant I had seen below, tending the mules on which his bales were conveyed. "Usted está solico, señor," said he, in a tone that expressed pity for my loneliness; and then, without further preface, took possession of the other end of the wooden bench on which I was seated; and which, by the way, together with a table, completed the whole furniture of the room.

"Voy á hacer á usted dos o tres preguntitas"—(I am going to ask you two or three little questions)—"I have got some *cargas* of Spanish cloth, and I wish to know if it would sell to advantage in the Plaza" (Gibraltar). I replied, that I could not give him the information he desired, as I had never visited the fortress, and was only on my way thither; but knowing the inferiority of Spanish to English cloth, I recommended him not to make the attempt. His system of business was a simple one. At the commencement of summer he started with his *cargas* of cloth from Catalonia, and wandered from town to town to the furthest limits of the kingdom. When the stock was all disposed of, he then sold his mules, returned homewards to spend the winter, and on the following summer started with a fresh cargo. "Now," continued he, "I am going to count my money: that I dare not do in presence of the gente below, in case—" and thereupon, drawing his hand in a significant manner across his throat, he indicated the fate that awaited it should he display his gold before their eyes. Unwinding the long sash round his waist, he extracted a leathern bag from a pouch at one end,



and poured its glittering contents on the table. I remarked among the gold pieces a goodly number of onzas, and drew the inference that his wanderings had not been unprofitable. Then restoring the bag to its place in the girdle, the usual purse of Spaniards in his rank of life, he folded it round his body, and wishing me a journey on the morrow "without novelty," took his departure.

On the following morning we were skirting a portion of the great plain of the Guadalquivir. On the left hand stretched the precipitous ranges by which it is bounded on the south, but in the opposite direction the horizon receded into the far distance, enclosing a wide tract of the level but fertile region. About a league from Archidona a lonely mass of rock rises loftily from the plain, and presents on the western side a perpendicular cliff. This is called the "Peña de los Enamorados," the "Rock of the Lovers;" and though I questioned Juan and some other travellers who had joined us regarding the origin of this romantic title, neither legend nor moving incident could I elicit, and, in default thereof, I must leave the reader's imagination to supply one. Then, a league further on, came Antequera, picturesquely resting in a hollow between two mountain ridges; on its northern side extended a broad belt of olive plantations, among which white cottages gleamed; and on the outskirts of the dark mass of foliage there were scattered farm-houses, each one a picture of rural wealth and security. Such a prospect is rare in Andalucia, and was the more striking here from its contrast to the general aspect of the country on the right, which, though fertile, had all the features of a weary land, wherein no green leaf nor great rock threw its friendly shade.

The inhabitants of Antequera enjoy the reputation of being "muy mala gente"—so affirmed a couple of farmers who rode beside us, and vied with each other in recounting tales of their lawless deeds. Robbery, in all its branches, was the favourite profession of the sons of Antequera; and besides being proficient in the usual methods of gaining a livelihood by this means, they had displayed an adroitness, peculiar to themselves, in kidnapping travellers and residents, in order to extract a ransom from their friends. Sometimes, but very rarely, it happened that discovery followed their attempts, so ingeniously were their plans laid; but on one occasion, when an abduction had been successfully effected, the perpetrators were detected in the following manner.

A party had seized and carried off the son of a gentleman in the neighbourhood, and had succeeded in conveying him without discovery to a house in the town. By blindfolding the individuals thus seized, and conducting them by circuitous routes, and under cover of night, it was rendered impossible for the keenest eye to trace their retreat; and the individuals themselves, on being released, were equally at a loss to know where they had been confined, for the same precautions were taken on their being set at liberty. In like manner, no clue likely to lead to detection was to be obtained within the place of durance itself, as the captives were confined to a chamber from which every prospect was carefully excluded. So it fared ill with this young man, who wearily passed some days and nights in his darkened apartment, seeing nothing, hearing nothing, and a prey to anxiety regarding his fate. One day, however, he heard a scream in the adjoining house, where hitherto all had been silence; and putting his ear to the wall, was enabled to distinguish the voices and even the

words of the speakers. The outcry arose from a woman having fallen on the staircase and broken a leg. Among the various directions and orders to which the accident gave rise, his ear caught the command to run for the doctor, whose name was mentioned at length. This information he treasured up, and so on being liberated it was no difficult matter to ascertain the address of the doctor, and from him learn where the accident had occurred. Afterwards the justicia were put upon the scent; and "por fin," added my informant, the evil-doers were recognised and condemned to ten years of presidio.

I had, however, been accustomed to connect Antequera in my thoughts with associations of a very different and more pleasing character than those suggested by such stories as the preceding, and could not so readily bring my mind to admit the idea that it was little better than a den of thieves and kidnappers. My prepossessions were founded on the following touching incident of the olden times, in which the name of the town is introduced. The tale is related by Conde at the conclusion of his *Historia de la Dominacion de los Arabes en España*.

At the time when Antequera was in possession of the Christians, and was a frontier post against the kingdom of Granada, its alcaide was a caballero named Narvaez. As was customary, he made inroads upon the territory of Granada, sometimes in person, but at other times by followers whom he despatched for that end; the same custom prevailed among the Granadinos upon that frontier district. It came to pass on one occasion, that Narvaez despatched certain horsemen to scour the country; and these, setting forth at a suitable hour, penetrated far within the confines of Granada. Through-

out their journey they found no other prize than a valiant youth, who was proceeding in the manner that shall be here told ; and, as it was night, he was prevented from escaping, for he unexpectedly encountered the horsemen of Narvaez : and so, as they perceived that no more prey was to be gained, and being furthermore apprised by their captive that the *campiña* was cleared, on the following morning they returned to Ronda and presented him to their chief. The youth was of the age of twenty-two or twenty-three years, a caballero, and of graceful appearance ; he wore a surcoat of purple silk elegantly ornamented, and a short but very fine toque over a scarlet bonnet ; his horse was of the best, and he bore a lance and target wrought in the style of those carried by the principal Moors. Narvaez inquired of him who he was, and he replied that he was the son of the alcaide of Ronda, who was well known to the Christians for a valiant warrior. Being questioned whither he was proceeding, he returned no answer, but wept so much that tears impeded his utterance. Said Narvaez, " I marvel much that thou, who art a cavalier, and the son of so valiant a father, shouldst be so overcome, and, knowing that these are the ordinary misfortunes of war, shouldst thus weep like a woman, while thy mien is that of a soldier and caballero."

" I do not weep," answered the Moor, " because I am in captivity, nor for being thy prisoner, nor are these tears for the loss of my liberty ; but for another and a greater loss, which afflicts me more than the state in which I now see myself."

On hearing these words, Narvaez pressed him to unfold the cause of his grief, and the Moor continued :

" Know, then, that for a long time I have loved the



daughter of the alcaide of such a castle, and have served her loyally, many times fighting in her behalf against you Christians; and she, recognising these obligations, was resolved to become my bride, and had intimated to me her willingness to accompany me to my home, leaving that of her father for the love of me; and while I was proceeding, overjoyed, and anticipating the completion of my happiness, it so pleased my evil destiny that I should be surprised by your horsemen, and should be bereft of liberty, and the happiness and good fortune I promised myself. If this appears to thee a thing unworthy of tears, I know not how to show the sorrow that fills me."

So great was the commiseration felt by Narvaez, that he said, "Thou art a caballero; and if as a cavalier thou engagemst to return to duresse, I will grant thee leave upon thy word and honour."

The Moor assented, and, giving his parole, departed; and that night reached the castle where his lady was, and found means to apprise her that he had arrived. She, on her part, contrived to afford him an opportunity of conversing privately; but all the discourse of the Moor was a torrent of tears, unaccompanied by words. The lady, amazed at the sight, said, "How is this? Dost thou lament now that thy wishes may be realised, and thou hast it in thy power to bear me hence?"

But the Moor answered: "Know, that as I was coming to see thee, I was captured by the horsemen of Ronda, who carried me to Narvaez; and he, like a worthy caballero, on learning my evil fate, took compassion on me, and on my word of honour granted me leave to see thee. And thus I come, not as a free man, but as a slave: and since my liberty is gone, God forbid that, loving you as I do, I should bear thee



where thine would be lost also ; I will return, for I have pledged my word, and will seek to ransom myself and visit thee again."

The Moorish lady then said : " Hitherto thou hast testified thy affection, and now thou givest the best proof of it, having so deep a regard for my liberty ; but since thou art so worthy a caballero as to study what is due to me and to thy plighted word, God forbid that I should be the wife of any one but thee. And although thou mayest refuse, I will yet accompany thee ; and if thou art to be a slave, I shall be one also ; and if God shall give thee liberty, he will give it to me likewise. Here is a coffer with very precious jewels : take me behind thee on thy steed, for I am well pleased to become the companion of thy misfortunes."

Having said this, she quitted the castle, and he raised her to the croup of his horse ; and on the following day they reached Ronda, and presented themselves before Narvaez, who received them with distinction and entertained them with festivities, making them presents, and celebrating the love of the Moorish lady and the honour and truth of the Moor ; and on the following day he gave them licence to return in freedom to their own land, and caused them to be escorted until they were placed in safety. This adventure—the affection of the damsel and of the Granadino, and, above all, the generosity of Narvaez, was much celebrated by the good cavaliers of Granada, and was sung to verses of the most famous poets of the times.

About two leagues from Antequera appeared the village of Fuente de la Piedra, embosomed in olive woods, which are abundant here ; the country around was well cultivated, and now began to undulate and to rise into gentle slopes, for we were approaching a moun-

tain district. A short way from the last-named village, a lake came into view—a rare sight in Andalucia, and, indeed, in other provinces of Spain; but even had it been less unfrequent, the singular spectacle it exhibited would have attracted the most careless eye. It was a lake of salt, whose surface was covered with a saline incrustation white as snow, that sparkled and glanced in the sunshine as if strewn with diamonds. As salt is a monopoly in the hands of government, this natural manufactory was carefully watched by a band of guardas—Juan said as many as three hundred—lest the article should be abstracted by the surrounding population, and the revenue thereby injured. Such a restriction, like the whole prohibitory system of Spain, only tended to foster smuggling, without benefiting the nation; and here its effects were manifest: we ourselves espied a peasant ensconced along with his burro in a bush, evidently with the design of stealing down to the lake on the first favourable opportunity, and filling the sacks his animal carried. Sometimes the cordon has been broken in a more audacious style. A few years ago there was a rising *en masse* of the country people, by whom the guardas were overpowered and expelled from their stations. Every one then helped himself, and continued to do so for the space of three weeks, during which time there was free access to the lake; at last a detachment of troops came up from Malaga, by whom affairs were restored to their former footing. Such are the “*cosas de España!*” Two leagues more concluded the journey for the day, which terminated at the clean little town of Campillos; its *posada* was no exception to the general appearance of the *pueblo*, and proved to be one of the best in Andalucia.

Next morning, after traversing a wide open plain,

with low hills in the distance, we reached the frontier sierras of the mountainous region of Bonda; thenceforward the bold and picturesque replaced the tame scenery of the plain. Our way wound up a pass by a rugged bridle-road, each step of the ascent revealing some new feature of the varied prospect—some peak, crag, or ravine, that had been invisible from below. On looking back, the great plain of the Guadalquivir presented a magnificent panorama of richness and fertility, its broad tracts of cultivation being mingled with gently rising eminences, and the whole diversified with hamlets and villages. At the summit of the pass a new scene was unfolded to our eyes. We looked down upon a deep circular valley, teeming with the signs of successful industry. Olive plantations and orchards clung to its sides; snug farmhouses, shaded by forest trees, occupied conspicuous positions; and surrounding the whole rose a rugged wall of craggy ridges and naked peaks, as barren and sunburnt as the hollow at their feet was green and fruitful. Then, as we proceeded, the castle of this mountain valley made itself visible, perched on the summit of a singular mass of rock that overhung the woody vale below. Its roofless towers and ruined battlements betokened that danger had ceased to lower above the peaceful scene, and that the husbandman no longer sought their shelter from the storm of war; behind it a few cottages peeped forth, half hidden by its dark walls, which concealed from view the pueblo to which they belonged. The name of this fortress and pueblo is Teba Coud; and, uncouth as the words sound, there is to a Scotchman an historic interest connected with them that must make them dear to his national pride. By some writers this secluded vale is made the scene of the gallant achieve-



ment that closed the eventful life of Douglas, the friend and companion in arms of Robert the Bruce. Conde, however, places it before the pueblo of Teba de Ardales, about a league to the southward of this spot. At the time I passed by this route I was unaware of this fact, or even of the existence of another Teba, as the pueblo he mentions is designated in Spanish maps by no other title than Ardales; but though pressed for time, I could not have denied myself the gratification of seeking the field where the "good Sir James" shouted for the last time the war-cry of his house, and resigned his life to the chivalrous impulses of his nature. "Observing a knight of his own company to be surrounded by a body of Moors, who had suddenly rallied, 'Alás!' said he, 'yonder worthy knight shall perish but for present help;' and with the few men who now attended him, amounting to no more than ten, he turned hastily to attempt his rescue. He soon found himself hard pressed by the numbers who thronged upon him. Taking from his neck the silver casquet which contained the heart of Bruce, he threw it before him among the thickest of the enemy, saying. 'Now pass thou onward before us as thou wert wont, and I will follow thee or die.' Douglas and almost the whole of the brave men who fought by his side were here slain. His body and the casquet containing the embalmed heart of Bruce were found together upon the field, and were by his surviving companions conveyed with great care and reverence into Scotland."

The scenery which succeeds this romantic valley is strikingly beautiful, and incomparably superior to anything of the kind in Andalucia. For many a mile it presents a series of unequalled prospects, which, as the track generally led along the summit of elevated ridges,

were at once varied and commanding. Deep valleys clothed with vineyards, corn-fields, and olive-groves, tempted the eye to look down and survey their beauties: and when sated with the smiling scene, it had only to direct a glance upwards to behold villages nestling high among crags and glens, or perched upon woody terraces projecting from the sides of the mountains; or, if willing to rove further, there were picturesque peaks in the distance, blue as the heavens above them, and divested of their natural wildness by the celestial hue they wore. After a ride of six hours I alighted at the Venta del Ciego, feeling somewhat acutely the effects of mountain air upon the appetite. The usual query, "Have you any eggs?" was answered in the negative. "What else?" "Bacalao." Not being disposed to try the stockfish, which in the ventas is more famous for its "ancient and fishlike smell" than for its savoury qualities, I contented myself with a frugal repast of melons and bread, washed down by the strong wine of the neighbourhood. While thus engaged, a peasant entered, and placed in the hands of the host a box of rude workmanship, one side of which was formed of glass instead of wood. The whole company burst out into raptures of admiration at the beauty of the object the case contained. Mine host kissed it reverently, his spouse and children did the same, and all testified the highest veneration for so wonderful a work of art. After being sufficiently lauded, the image—for it was an image of the Virgin that the box enshrined—was handed to me; and my heretical eyes discovered it to be a common doll, imbedded in a profusion of artificial flowers, which, to all appearance, had at one time adorned some fair one's bonnet. The image was highly esteemed for its medical virtues and



was a sovereign remedy against the ills to which cattle, horses, and pigs were subject.

From the venta the track still continued to wind among the finest mountain scenery imaginable, until, on gaining the crest of a high ridge, the towers and spires of Ronda were distinguished. We had, however, ere reaching it, to traverse a broad plain thickly clothed with vineyards and olive-grounds, particularly the latter, which in the vicinity of the town supersede every other description of tree. From this, the northern side, the aspect of Ronda is far from striking, and fails to realise one's ideal of a mountain capital. Its outline of dark walls rises but little above the level of the fertile basin in which it stands; and but for the lofty circle of sierras in the background, and the remembrance of the rugged path he has pursued with hazard and toil, the spectator might fancy it a city of a plain, rather than the metropolis of a wild assemblage of elevations. Yet, although the ground in the vicinity tends to favour this resemblance, its altitude above the level of the sea cannot be less than fifteen hundred feet; and of this the traveller becomes painfully conscious as he climbs the rapid and precipitous ascents which form its only approaches. It is, however, after entering the gates of Ronda, that one is introduced to the extraordinary natural wonder which proclaims it to be one of the most singular of European towns. Let the reader imagine a compact and walled town cloven in twain by a fearful chasm nigh three hundred feet deep, from the bottom of which a foaming and boiling stream sends its roar upwards. All communication between the divided portions is as effectually cut off as if seas rolled between; and, but for a bridge that spans the void at its narrowest part, the inhabitants on one side would be de-

nied all intercourse with those on the other, except by the toilsome mode of descending by circuitous paths to the bed of the stream, and ascending in a similar fashion the opposite cliff. Standing on this bridge, the spectacle in sight is one that excites mingled sensations of dread, awe, and wonder. The spectator overhangs a dark and narrow gulf at a giddy height, and from that position, perilous, as fancy calls it, scans with unwonted feelings the yawning fissure over which he is suspended. The precipices of solid rock that enclose it, the deep-sunk bed of the river, the hollow murmurs it gives forth, the gloom that shrouds its waters, and the strange echoes reflected from the cliffs, all leave the most vivid impressions upon his senses, and stamp the scene as one that equals in its reality the pictures which his imagination may have sometimes drawn of a "gulf profound." These are the chief features of the prospect looking towards the east: in the opposite direction the eye commands a wider range, and overlooks the vale to which the river far below is impetuously rushing. It is a sunlit cavity in the heart of rude inequalities; and, bounteously adorned as it is with natural beauties, there floats over it a serenity derived from its lowly position, that gives an exquisite effect to each charm. The river now winds in slackened course between steep though verdant banks; gardens and vineyards cling to the slopes; cottages embowered in orange-groves rise picturesquely upon projecting points, or occupy sunny nooks: all this forms a scene which a painter would select to represent seclusion and peace blended with patient industry and humble happiness. Descending to the bed of the river by a steep and winding path on the western side of the bridge, the view, again looking towards the east, is little less striking than from above.

In front rises the ponderous bridge—so massive in its construction as to seem rather placed for the purpose of preventing the sides of the chasm from collapsing, than for arching the intervening space. Over the rocks at its foundation a stream of foam is precipitated in the form of a cascade, and falls but a short distance from an antique mill, apparently about to be crushed by the huge rocks that overhang it. Then looking through the arch of the bridge as through a portal, the eye travels up the river-worn pass, and sees it bounded by precipices whose foundations are laid in unbroken gloom: on their summits, however, the sunbeams strike, and along the dangerous verge rises a succession of dwellings, whose white walls, pierced by windows, appear to lean over the abyss. The whole scene is a combination of savage grandeur and picturesque effect, which far surpasses the power of words to describe; but, with its gloom, its lofty walls of rock, and wild features, often rises before the memory of the spectator.

From the summit of the precipice on the southern side, a staircase cut out of the solid rock descends to the bed of the river, and ranks among the wonders of Ronda. This, which is called the Mina, has its entrance from a dwelling styled the Casa Real. The old housekeeper who opened the door showed me into the sala, while she went to procure a lantern, and summon a servant to conduct me down the ancient and now disused communication. In the room my attention was struck by an old-fashioned door, upon which was painted a likeness of Queen Isabella the Catholic, and apparently of an ancient date: in her right hand she bore the sceptre of state, and in the left hand corner of the picture the arms of Castile were distinguishable. When the old lady returned, I inquired if there was any history at-

tached to this venerable portrait of the Queen Isabel. "La Reina Isabel!" exclaimed she and her hand-maiden, with broad smiles on their countenances; "that is a picture of Santa Barbara, and she is the patron saint of the house. Ave Maria! what a strange mistake!" And upon this their merriment at my expense broke out anew. It would have been cruel to have shaken their belief in what was manifestly an article of their faith, so I contented myself with indulging my mirth at their expense as soon as the door closed behind me. It was nothing, however, to that of the worshippers of Santa Barbara, for as I crossed the court I could hear them giving free vent to their amusement at the ludicrous error into which they supposed I had fallen.

In a small garden on the brink of the precipice was the entrance to the staircase: after descending a few yards, every appearance of steps was lost, and in their place an inclined plane of rubbish presented itself. Down this we slid or stumbled, having on the one side massive walls with loopholes for the admission of light, and, as we descended lower, on either hand a variety of dungeons, small, dismal, and dark. At the bottom a door gave egress; and stepping out, we stood in the bed of the river: its waters, imprisoned between the lofty precipices that excluded all but a narrow strip of heaven from our eyes, had a sullen aspect, and moved sluggishly among the masses of rock that encumbered their channel. Their olive-green hue recalled the epithet of "*verdé*," which is given to this stream in the well-known ballad commencing with:—

Rio verde, rio verde,  
Tinto vas en sangre viva.  
Entre ti y Sierra Bermeja  
Murio gran cavalleria.



O rio verde, river green,  
All dark with life's blood is thy flow,  
The red sierra and thee between  
A gallant chivalry lies low.

From the river the prospect was imposing in the extreme: the lofty walls of rock that rose frowningly in the air, the gloom and silence brooding over the spot, and the dark stream at our feet, all mingled with the prison-like air of the dwellings visible to impress the mind with awe; and recollecting the blood-stained history of the town, it was not difficult to fancy that the sullen river had witnessed many a deed in keeping with the character of the scenery. From this point it is seen, that of the Mina the upper part alone is hewn out of the rock. About half way down, a natural cleft occurs in the precipice, of which advantage has been taken; and being enclosed with solid masonry, it was an easy matter to carry the staircase downwards. According to tradition, it was the weary task of the Christian captives to carry up supplies of water by this passage to the town above; and there are shown on the sides of the staircase certain crosses, said to have been engraved by the nails of the captives thus employed. This is a favourite legend in Andalusia, and there are several places where the traveller sees crosses, alleged, like those in the Mina, to have been the work of pious nails; in particular, there is one in the mosque at Cordova, which tradition affirms to have been wrought in this manner by a captive, who was chained for many years to the pillar upon which it occurs. Regarding this instance, it is scarcely necessary to point out the improbability of the tale; as the well-known prejudice of Mahomedans against the admission of Christians into their temples renders it far from likely that, in the days

of Moorish fanaticism, a dog of a Christian captive would be permitted to outrage their most holy fane with his presence, far less to sculpture within its precincts the hated emblem of Christianity.

Ronda is supposed to occupy the site of the Arunda of the Romans, by whom its importance as a defensible position could hardly have been overlooked. After the Arabs became masters of the province, it rose from its ruins into a town of note, and was then, as now, the capital of the mountain community who dwell in the surrounding fastnesses. These observations, however, apply only to that portion of the town which lies on the southern side of the Guadiaro; the edifices in the opposite quarter are of a more modern character than those in the old town, and, it is probable, date only from the days of the conquistadores. On the decline of the kingdom of Granada, the surrounding district was dismembered from its territories in 1328, and for a time converted into a separate kingdom, of which Ronda was the head. The head of this petty state was an African prince, who appears to have wrested it by force of arms from the native monarchs; but on the accession of Muley Mahomed the Fourth to the throne of Granada, the invaders were expelled, and Ronda was again incorporated with the last of the Andalucian monarchies. Thenceforward its name occurs but seldom in the Moorish chronicles until the era of Ferdinand and Isabella again brings it forward, in the year 1485, to maintain an obstinate defence against its Christian assailants. The valour of its inhabitants, however, was of little avail against the overpowering forces of the besiegers; and after having vainly sought succour from Granada, they were constrained to yield the town to their foes.

The population of Ronda now amounts to nearly

14,000 inhabitants. Trade and manufactures are despised by its citizens, whose chief occupation is to smuggle goods from Gibraltar into the interior of the province. For this the position of their native town is admirably adapted; surrounded by wild sierras, which are traversed in every direction by multitudes of mountain paths, it is as well fitted to receive as it is to convey to other districts the cargoes of the contrabandista. Hence the population of the Serrania bear a reputation for lawlessness, which is not wholly undeserved. Their dusky sierras have not only fostered the wild love of independence characteristic of mountaineers, but, from being the theatre of an open warfare against the laws, have engendered a turbulent spirit, which it is at all times difficult for the Spanish Government to repress, and which occasionally sets its utmost powers at defiance. During the *Guerra de Independencia*, the Serranos kept their French invaders in a state of continual disquietude—sometimes by open resistance, sometimes by a hollow submission, which rose into revolt on the first favourable opportunity. M. Rocca, in his graphic account of the operations of the French in the Serrania, faithfully paints the savage characters of the mountaineers, and their unconquerable hostility to the *Gavachos*—the term of contempt invariably applied by Spaniards to his countrymen. On one occasion their detestation took a ludicrous turn, and at the village of Olbera, to the northward of Ronda, some of his compatriots were treated to a repast which consisted of asses' flesh. The Frenchmen found the veal, as it was called, rather tough, but did not discover the mistake until some time afterwards, when it was necessary to meet their entertainers in warlike fashion; they were then saluted with the cry, "You ate asses' flesh at Olbera!"

and from that time every other taunt they had been accustomed to hear was supplanted by this one, in the application of which their mountain opponents appeared to derive an exquisite satisfaction.

Besides a plaza de toros, said to be one of the best in Spain, Ronda possesses an Alameda, the site of which is picturesque in the extreme. Its shady walks extend along the brow of a precipice, from whence, as he inhales the western breeze, the spectator casts his eye over an unequalled prospect of valley, river, and mountain. Far below him winds the Guadiaro amid the softest features of a vale—verdant slopes, hanging groves, cottages embowered in orchards, and grey mills leaning over its stream: as the view widens, its expression becomes more wildly beautiful; an amphitheatre of mountains encloses this rejoicing Eden, their acclivities diversified by glens and woody dells with which the sunshine plays capriciously; and beyond their broken outlines are seen those distant blue peaks which are seldom wanting in an Andalucian landscape, and here remind the observer that he is in the heart of an alpine region.

The departure of a couple of mules is an hourly occurrence at large inns, yet it had not lost the charm of novelty for that host of idlers who are to be met with in Ronda as in all Spanish towns. On descending to the street, I found Juan in the centre of a group of men in tattered brown cloaks, whose eyes followed his movements as he loaded the animals, while their lips were occupied with paper cigars. One, who was distinguished from the others by smoking a “puro,” had got hold of my double-barreled gun, and was showing to a circle of listeners how it was fired. “You see, when you fire the right barrel, you must put the gun to the



right shoulder; but when you fire the left, then you must put it to the left shoulder." The explanation appeared quite satisfactory to his audience. With one voice they exclaimed, "What a wonderful gun!" and regarded the speaker as an oracle of knowledge. The same individual, a swarthy little man, in whose piercing eye there was expressed fully as much cunning as intelligence, then accosted Juan. The method he took to ingratiate himself with that trusty personage, proved that he was better acquainted with the road to Spanish sympathies than with the mode of discharging double-barrels. His first query related to the birth-place of my mozo. "I am from Santo Cruz," said Juan. "Well, how strange!" added the other; "I am from the same town." "But I was brought up in Granada." "Well, still more strange! I was brought up there also. *Vamos, paysano, vamos á la bodega!*" (Come, my countryman, let us go to the tavern.) Juan, however, turned a deaf ear to this invitation, which he well knew concealed some sinister purpose either towards himself or his master, and bluntly bade his paysano stand aside.

Passing down a long and narrow street adorned with some handsome houses, we quitted the town by a road which was bounded on one side by an ancient Moorish wall. This quarter had been fortified by the Moors with more than usual care, as was evident from the abundant remains of the defences with which they had surrounded it. Of these there appeared to have been three separate lines, each one capable of opposing an effectual resistance to an enemy, and thus triply guarding what was naturally the weakest point of the city; for on this side are wanting the crags and precipices which everywhere else defy the approach of war. Seen

from the southward, the position of Ronda is far more characteristic of the mountain kingdom it represents than from the opposite direction. The fruitful basin still meets the eye, its surface shadowed with foliage or yellow with corn-fields; but in the midst rises a rocky height, upon which the city stands in conscious security. Begirt with inaccessible steeps, whose summits are surmounted by walls of massive strength, it looks the war-loving stronghold, the citadel of a fierce mountain race, to whom warfare was once the breath of their nostrils, and whose descendants even yet retain the unquiet spirit of their fiery ancestors.

Descending the other side of the heights from which we had surveyed this striking scene, we plunged deep among the roots of an assemblage of mountains, lofty, wild, and wrapped in the brown mantle of sterility. Our path was both execrable and dangerous; leading sometimes over the polished surface of the sloping rock, or winding between huge masses detached from the summits, with the occasional variety of a precipice on one hand to enhance its perils. As we came to the bottom of a wild hollow, it passed by a roofless dwelling. I inquired of a peasant, who had shortly before joined us, what the place had been; and was informed that it had once been a venta, and was demolished by authority.

“Why so?”

“When a venta is destroyed by authority,” replied the man, “everybody knows the reason; it was a notorious harbouring place for robbers, and was in consequence pulled down.”

In truth, a fitter spot for the outlaw's deeds could hardly be found: on either hand the venta commanded a view of the track as it wound by a long descent to its

door; and in front was the mouth of a narrow ravine, down which the robber could dive and in a few moments be lost to sight.

Gradually the scenery changed after we had passed the village of Atajate, about ten miles from Ronda; and the country, though still mountainous and rugged, wore the cheering smile of cultivation, and began to be diversified with woods and vegetation. Like the approach to Ronda from the north, the path led along the crest of a high ridge, from whence the eye scanned with ease the winding course of the picturesque valleys on either side, and through openings in the surrounding sierras caught glimpses of distant steeps upon which pine forests hung, or more rarely of mountain fortresses, capping with their weather-stained circlet of ruins some lonely crag. Within the valleys was to be seen a combination of natural beauties and the gladdening works of industry: now the path threaded an olive-grove, or skirted some sunny slope; now the vines hung their tempting clusters over our heads; and on mounting higher the scene was varied by the view of dark passes, wooded heights, and all the bolder features of a mountain landscape. What added to the animation of the prospect was the number of villages and hamlets which clung to the acclivities, each one within its own little domain of garden and foliage. Some lay deep in the valleys, and were only half seen amid a surrounding growth of trees, but the greater number had climbed to loftier sites, "*adondese despeñan las palomas*," as Juan poetically phrased it; and either crowned some craggy platform with white edifices, or retired within sheltered recesses overhung by cliffs, and accessible only by winding paths from below.

It was dark when we reached Gaucin and entered its

solitary posada, after traversing a long street through which the wind swept coldly. Indeed, from the moment the sun had descended beneath the horizon, we had felt the temperature sensibly lowered, and were glad to wrap ourselves in our mantas on account of the wind, which at the same time began to rise, and before we arrived at the inn was blowing down the ravines in sharp gusts. For the first time during my wanderings I felt chilled, and would have hailed a blazing fire with satisfaction. But no such welcome sight awaited us in the posada. Here, as in every posada in the province, the sole fireplace in the house was that which served for cooking the meals of the household and strangers ; and a more cheerless hearth can hardly be imagined. It was placed at one end of a large apartment, half stable, half kitchen, the floor of which seemed to have been modelled after the roughly-paved street outside, and was scarcely so clean. At first sight it appeared a mere mass of masonry built up against the wall to the height of three or four feet ; but on closer inspection the structure was seen to be perforated by a row of apertures, from which some heat was felt to proceed. These apertures are, in fact, furnaces on a diminutive scale, and when required for the purposes of cooking are filled with charcoal. This fuel, however, though it gives out a considerable degree of heat, demands constant nursing, so that half the time of the cook is consumed in coaxing it into a glow by means of primitive fans of esparto. Comfortless as it looked, this was the only place where some warmth was to be had ; and drawing my stool close to it, I endeavoured to fancy I was protected against the keenness of the mountain air that rushed in at the open gate and a hundred loopholes. Meanwhile, a slipshod damsel was preparing supper ;



Juan having opportunely purchased a rabbit from a boy who was hawking them about the street, and who had followed us into the posada. In a trice the animal was chopped into small pieces, and set to stew in an earthenware pipkin, alongside of another vessel of the same nature, in which our Maritornes proceeded to boil some rice. In due course her labours came to a conclusion: a brown bowl was produced, into which the contents of the pipkins were cast with but little ceremony; next she poured some boiling oil over the mess; and then setting the dish upon a stool, placed beside it a couple of crusts of bread. The latter, it is necessary to observe, were supplied as substitutes for knives, forks, and spoons, rather than as an addition to the edibles; and accordingly, while Juan seized one, I possessed myself of the other, and plunging it into the pilaw, contrived to extract a portion and to burn my fingers at the same time. The "rage of hunger," however, makes light of such obstacles: in a wonderfully short space of time our fingers met at the bottom of the bowl, having carried everything before them, and then we stopped; but this was not enough for Juan, for his last bone being picked, he finished off with devouring the faithful crust he wielded. This done, he proceeded to smoke his "papel," while I retreated to the chamber in the upper story, to which I climbed by rickety wooden stairs. "There," said Maritornes, who had shown the way, "there is a cama fit for gente decente." I ventured to question the fitness of the eulogium, after a slight inspection of the wretched apology for a bed to which she pointed. The coverlet and sheets had a wondrous dingy aspect, more especially the latter, which, besides, bore witness to the sanguinary attacks of the native population upon the per-

sons of the last occupants. This, however, was nothing new to my eyes; and moreover, having the prospect of sleeping beneath an English roof the following night, I was little inclined to be fastidious on the last occasion I was to encounter the discomforts of a Spanish posada. But, before stretching myself on a couch where it was manifest the pulga and chinche lorded it over the sleeper, I put in practice certain precautions which will explain to the reader why in these pages he has met with no such passages as "Passed a sleepless night, occasioned by the assaults of the carnivorous inhabitants of the bed. Rose early, glad to escape from the vampires who tenanted my couch," &c.

The truth is, that the writers of these complaints have themselves to blame in no small degree for undergoing the sufferings which they recount for the benefit of the public. They carry their English habits into pulga-ridden Spain, and dispose themselves to rest upon the notoriously populated beds in the same fashion in which they would court sleep in an English chamber. Now this is tantamount to offering themselves up to be sacrificed; and if it be done through an obstinate adherence to national customs, the complainers, I repeat, have little right to our sympathy for their murdered repose. Let them provide themselves, as some have done, with a huge sack, in which to encase their persons before lying down to rest—or, as I found equally effectual and much more convenient, with loose drawers, enclosing the feet, and drawn round the waist by a cord—and I venture to predict their rest will be untroubled by nocturnal assailants. To this, if their quarters be very suspicious, let them add cotton gloves for the hands, nightcap, and neckcloth, and their armour is then complete. If the places of joining be

carefully secured, nothing can penetrate it; and they will enjoy the satisfaction, should they awake at night, of beholding their pillow beleaguered in vain by a multitude of nightly disturbers.

Before daybreak I was on the way to Gibraltar, which it was necessary to reach before sunset. For more than an hour the path was a series of precipitous descents, down which our mules slid and scrambled, without however once missing their footing. At length we reached the bed of a torrent, and which thenceforward was our road. On looking back, as soon as the light permitted a view to be caught, the scene was strikingly beautiful. Lofty mountains rose in every variety of wild shape that crag and forest could compose; high among them was perched the village we had quitted, now glistening like a snow-patch, for the morning sun was shining strongly on its whitened dwellings, and adding to their brilliancy. Then, in a short time, the whole prospect underwent a transformation. A thunderstorm gathered upon the highest peaks, and slowly settling down upon the lower elevations, gradually buried each feature in darkness: the glistening village was blotted out by a gloomy mass of cloud; the crags around it lost their ragged outlines and became indistinct forms of vapour; while the sight of long columns of mist descending by the valleys and ravines was a pretty sure sign that, ere long, we too should feel the wrath of the elements. Juan, however, predicted that the storm would expend its fury on the mountains alone; but in half-an-hour it was upon us. The rain came down like a cascade, and drove so furiously against the faces of our animals, that instinctively they turned aside and buried their heads in a thicket of underwood by the bank of the torrent. For our-

selves, we followed their example ; or rather, wrapping our heads in our mantas, sat down under the bank to await the termination of the deluge. In another half-hour it had passed off, and we resumed our march down the stream. From this we diverged, ere long, to enter the noble forest of cork-trees that almost continuously stretches to San Roque, on the Bay of Gibraltar. On mounting a rising ground, the Rock itself came distinctly into view. At that distance its appearance resembled a huge wedge resting on its base, with an abrupt end turned towards Spain. We were, however, still a long way from it ; and it was a journey of many hours through the picturesque forest—which, however, enjoys but an indifferent reputation on the score of honesty—before we climbed the acclivity on which San Roque is situated. On the other side the waters of the bay spread out : and descending again to the sandy beach that bounds them, we urged our tired animals along this natural road, in order to reach the fortress before sunset, the hour at which the gates are closed. Half an hour before that time I had passed through the Spanish lines in front of the fortress ; and after having at the gate certified to the officer on guard that Juan meditated no villany against the Rock and its numerous garrison, I was suffered to pass in, and found myself in Gibraltar.

THE END.

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